

## NETANYAHU FACES ARREST WARRANT BY HAGUE COURT

### ALLEGING WAR CRIMES

Ex-Israel Defense Chief Is Also Accused — U.S. Rejects Charges

This article is by Matthew Mpoke Bigg, Aaron Boxerman, Steven Erlanger and Thomas Fuller.

KYIV, Ukraine — President Vladimir V. Putin escalated a tense showdown with the West on Thursday, saying that Russia had launched a new intermediate-range ballistic missile at Ukraine in response to Ukraine's recent use of American and British weapons to strike deeper into Russia.

In what appeared to be an ominous threat against Ukraine's Western allies, Mr. Putin also asserted that Russia had the right to strike the military facilities of countries "that allow their weapons to be used against our facilities."

His warning came hours after Russia's military fired a nuclear-capable ballistic missile at Ukraine that Western officials and analysts said was meant to instill fear in Kyiv and the West. Though the missile carried only conventional warheads, using it signaled that Russia could strike with nuclear weapons if it chooses.

"The regional conflict in Ukraine, previously provoked by the West, has acquired elements of a global character," Mr. Putin said in a rare address to the nation. "We are developing intermediate- and shorter-range missiles as a response to U.S. plans to produce and deploy intermediate- and shorter-range missiles in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region."

Mr. Putin has frequently wielded the threat of nuclear

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## India's Sugar Workers Who Quit, Fleeing Abuse, Often Risk Worse

This article is by Qadri Inzamam and Megha Rajagopalan and Saumya Khandelwal.

BEED, India — When his daughter turned 12, Gige Dutta decided this would be the year that he and his wife quit cutting sugar cane in the fields of western India. The work required a long migration, and his daughter would have to drop out of school — the first step for many girls on a lifelong path of abuse and poverty.

But his employer refused to let them quit. He and his friends beat up Mr. Dutta and forced him into a car, Mr. Dutta said. According to a report that he filed with a local government agency, the men drove him to a mill that says it supplies sugar to many international

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## Actor Wins Appeal on Charge Of a False Hate Crime Report

By JULIA JACOBS and MATT STEVENS

The Illinois Supreme Court on Thursday overturned the actor Jussie Smollett's conviction on charges that he lied to the police about being the victim of a racist and homophobic attack in 2019. The court ruled that Mr. Smollett had been unjustly prosecuted after he had already reached a deal to resolve the case without jail time.

The decision was a stunning reversal in a case that has seen more than five years of twists and turns. Mr. Smollett was initially regarded as the victim of an ugly

The court's decision to overturn

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### Concern at Northern Border

Canadians as well as Trump appointees are complaining about undocumented migrants along the world's longest border between two countries. PAGE A5

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### F.D.A. Clears Cannabis Study

A decision to go forward with a trial for the treatment of PTSD is the latest sign that health officials want more research on medical marijuana. PAGE A11

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### No College? These Jobs Pay.

A study identified 73 "launchpad jobs" that can help those without a four-year college degree advance and achieve higher salaries. PAGE B1

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### A Long, Splashy 'Wicked'

Cynthia Erivo stands out in this film, which is the first installment of a two-part adaptation of the Broadway show. Manohla Dargis has the review. PAGE C1

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### Matthew Schmitz

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## Gaetz Withdraws as Justice Dept. Pick



HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

### Seeing He Didn't Have Votes for Approval

This article is by Peter Baker, Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan.

WASHINGTON — Matt Gaetz, who faced a torrent of scrutiny over allegations of sex trafficking and drug use, abruptly withdrew his bid to become attorney general on Thursday in the first major political setback for President-elect Donald J. Trump since his election this month.

Mr. Gaetz has consistently denied the allegations, but his prospective nomination ran into trouble in the Senate, where Republicans were deeply reluctant to confirm someone to run the same Justice Department that once investigated him on suspicion of sex trafficking an underage girl, even though no charges were brought.

The collapse of Mr. Gaetz's prospective candidacy just 16 days after the election appeared to be the earliest such failed cabinet pick in modern history and underscored the haphazard way that Mr. Trump has gone about assembling his new administration. He picked Mr. Gaetz almost on a whim last week without extensive vetting, knowing that allegations were out there, but essentially daring Senate Republicans to accept him anyway.

On Thursday evening, Mr. Trump announced on social media that he planned to nominate Pam Bondi, the former attorney general of Florida and one of his defense lawyers in his first impeachment trial, to be U.S. attorney general.

What remained unclear on Thursday was whether Mr. Gaetz's withdrawal would embolden Senate Republicans to challenge other contentious cab-

## Big Auto's Plea to Trump: Force Us to Sell E.V.s

By CORAL DAVENPORT and JACK EWING

Three of the nation's largest automakers, Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, are strategizing with other car manufacturers on how to make a delicate request of President-elect Donald J. Trump: Don't scrap the federal regulations that compel the industry to sell electric vehicles.

The conversation would require diplomatic finesse. Mr. Trump has railed against the E.V. rules, which strictly limit the amount of

### Industry Doesn't Want to Waste Billions It's Already Invested

tailpipe pollution while also ramping up fuel economy standards. They are designed to get carmakers to produce more E.V.s and have been a cornerstone of President Biden's fight against climate change.

Mr. Trump sees them differently. He has falsely said the rules

amount to a Democratic mandate that would prevent Americans from buying the gasoline-powered cars of their choice — a concern of his campaign donors from the oil industry.

And Mr. Trump still holds grievances against some of the automakers, whom he views as having betrayed him because during his first term they supported Obama-era auto emissions rules.

In fact, most automakers don't love the more stringent rules Mr. Biden put in place. But they have already invested billions in a trans-

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Iceland Volcano Erupts Again

Lava flowed in the country's Reykjanes Peninsula, the region's seventh flare-up within the past year.



DERIK HAMILTON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pam Bondi, the new selection.

inet choices, such as Pete Hegseth, the former Fox News host tapped for defense secretary, or Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the conspiracy theorist and vaccine skeptic selected for secretary of health and human services.

In announcing his withdrawal a day after visiting the Senate, Mr. Gaetz insisted that he had support among fellow Republicans. But in fact, Mr. Gaetz had come to realize that he was struggling to amass enough votes to win Senate confirmation. He spoke with Mr. Trump late Thursday morning and decided to pull his name, according to people familiar with his thinking who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss his private decision-making.

"While the momentum was strong, it is clear that my confirmation was unfairly becoming a distraction to the critical work of the Trump/Vance Transition," Mr. Gaetz wrote on social media. "There is no time to waste on a needlessly protracted Washington scuffle, thus I'll be withdrawing my name from consideration

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**G.O.P. SUPPORT** Senators played down a sex assault claim against Trump's pick for defense. PAGE A17

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