

Effort to Expel Leader Builds In South Korea

Martial Law Bid Yields to Impeachment Vote

This article is by Choe Sang-Hun, John Yoon, Victoria Kim and Thomas Fuller.

SEOUL — Emboldened by their forceful rejection of military rule, members of South Korea's political opposition moved on Wednesday to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol, after his abrupt declaration of martial law failed spectacularly.

Several opposition parties, buoyed by thousands of protesters who took to the streets to denounce the president, jointly submitted the impeachment motion, which could be put to a vote as early as Friday. While the parties represent an overwhelming majority of the National Assembly, it remains unclear whether they will have the two-thirds vote needed to impeach.

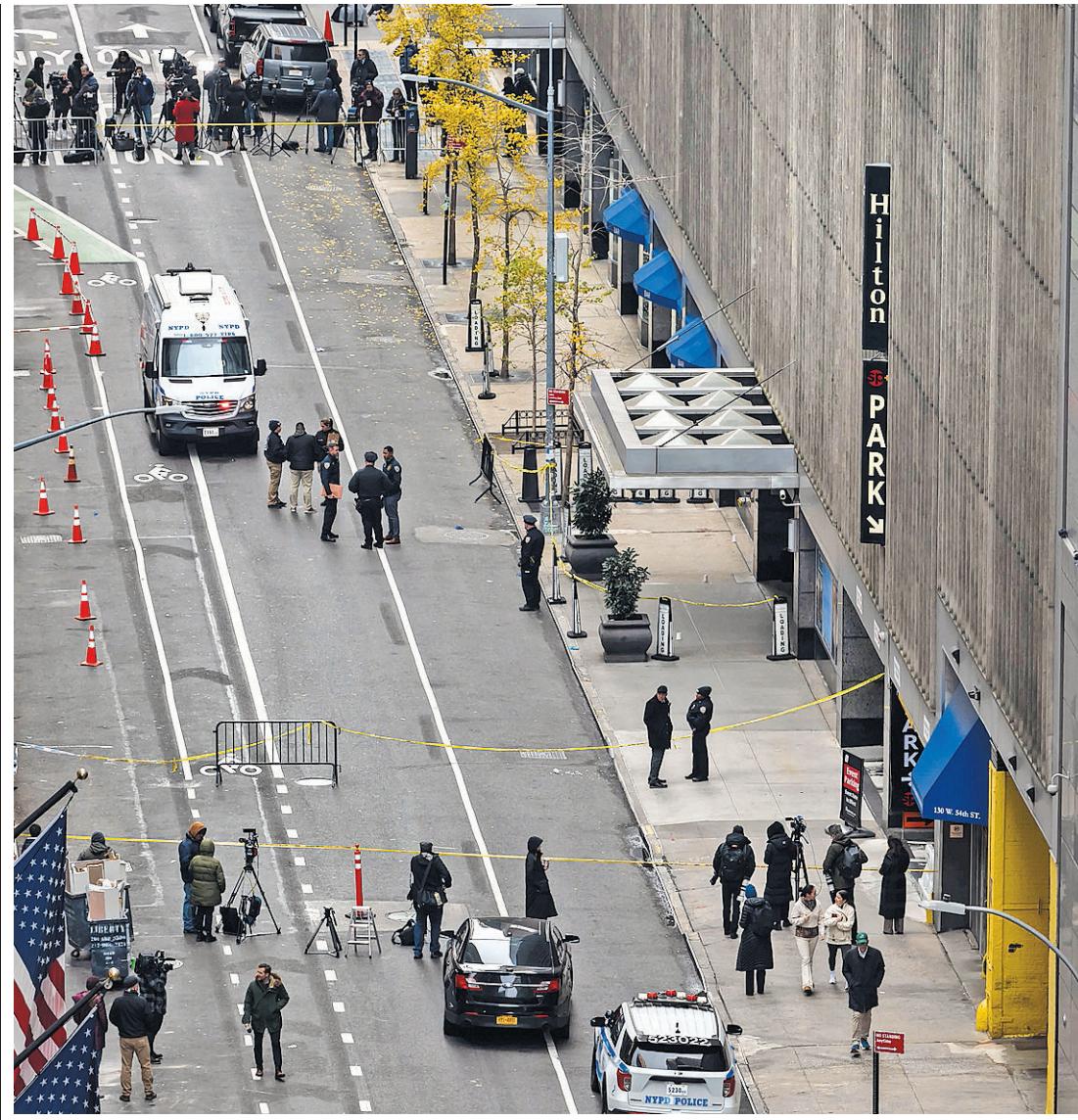
Mr. Yoon's surprise declaration of martial law on Tuesday night, the first attempt to impose military rule in more than four decades, incited chaos within one of America's closest allies and evoked memories of the authoritarian regimes that ruled South Korea until the 1980s.

It was an audacious attempt by the president to break the gridlock in government — between a mostly progressive assembly and a conservative executive — that has hobbled his nearly three years in power.

But in the end, martial law lasted only six hours. It backfired when lawmakers scrambled past heavily armed troops who had attempted to cordon off the assembly building. The 190 members present, out of 300 total, voted unanimously to rescind military rule — including 18 members from the president's own party.

Mr. Yoon's location was not publicly known Wednesday night and he seemed increasingly isolated. Members of his own party had denounced the martial law declaration and voted to overturn it.

Continued on Page A9



The Midtown scene of Brian Thompson's killing Wednesday morning. He led UnitedHealthcare.

Court Poised to Uphold Ban on Transgender Care

By ADAM LIPTAK
and EMILY BAZELON

WASHINGTON — Members of the Supreme Court's conservative majority seemed ready on Wednesday to uphold a Tennessee law denying transition care to transgender youth, with some of them saying that judgments about contested scientific evidence should be made by legislatures rather than judges.

"The Constitution leaves that question to the people's representatives, rather than to nine people, none of whom is a doctor," Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said.

Justices' Ruling in Case in Tennessee Could Curb Youth Access

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson responded that leaving the question to the states was an alarming abdication of responsibility. "I'm suddenly quite worried," she said.

The Tennessee law prohibits medical providers from prescribing puberty-delaying medication, providing hormone therapy or performing surgery to treat what the law called "purported discom-

fort or distress from a discordance between the minor's sex and asserted identity." But the law allows those same treatments for "a congenital defect, precocious puberty, disease or physical injury."

More than 20 other states have similar laws. The court's decision, expected by June, will almost certainly yield a major statement on transgender rights against the backdrop of a fierce public debate over the role gender identity should play in areas as varied as sports, bathrooms and pronouns.

The wide-ranging argument, which lasted two and a half hours,

Continued on Page A14

Bangladesh Is Left to Untangle How Its Economy Was Bleed Dry

By ALEX TRAVELLI
and SHAYEZA WALID

DHAKA, Bangladesh — The new governor of Bangladesh's central bank, Ahsan Mansur, calculates that about \$17 billion was siphoned from the country's financial system in the 15 years before the government of Sheikh Hasina collapsed in August.

Other economists guess that the true value looted during Ms. Hasina's rule, before she fled the country, could exceed \$30 billion. But no one can say for sure. Using a web of financial schemes, Mr. Mansur said, the perpetrators in the government and at some of the country's biggest companies pulled off what was effectively the largest bank heist in the history of money. And they did incalculable damage to Bangladesh's economy.

"The highest level of political authority realized that the banks are the best place to rob," said Mr. Mansur, an appointee of an interim government in Bangladesh. For an inside job, that meant taking control of the central bank and the ownership of a clutch of private banks and their boards of directors. The banks then issued billions of dollars in loans to companies, some of them fictional, that would never be paid back. Much of that money was then transferred



A defaced mural of Sheikh Hasina, the ousted prime minister of Bangladesh, in Dhaka, the capital.

out of the country illegally.

"Whole boards were hijacked," said Mr. Mansur, an economist who worked at the International Monetary Fund for 27 years. In that time, he never witnessed "any country where the highest level of the government, engineering with the help of some goons,"

managed "the systematic robbing of the banks."

In October, Mr. Mansur was in Washington to lobby the I.M.F. and other international lenders for financial help through the difficult period ahead. Like many members of the new government, led by the Nobel Prize-winning

economist Muhammad Yunus, he is a seasoned technocrat.

Bangladesh, home to 170 million people, is still reeling from the cycle of vengeance, including mob violence, that came after a protest movement toppled Ms. Hasina, expected to resign soon.

Continued on Page A12

Insurer C.E.O. Gunned Down In Manhattan

Shooter Coolly Awaited Target Outside Hotel

This article is by Michael Wilson, Chelsea Rose Marcias, Maria Cramer and Joe Rennison.

A sprawling manhunt with police officers, dogs and drones spread citywide on Wednesday after the chief executive of UnitedHealthcare was fatally shot outside a Midtown Manhattan hotel in what the police called a bold assassination.

The executive, Brian Thompson, 50, the leader of one of the country's largest companies, was shot just before dawn on West 54th Street near the New York Hilton Midtown, where UnitedHealthcare was holding its annual investors day. The surrounding blocks, draped in holiday decorations, are a hugely popular destination for tourists and shoppers alike.

The police commissioner, Jessica Tisch, who was sworn in last week, called the killing just after 6:45 a.m. a "brazen targeted attack" and said, "We will not rest until we identify and apprehend the shooter in this case."

The killer wore a dark, hooded jacket and a gray backpack, pictures released by the police showed, with his face covered to his nose. He apparently knew which door Mr. Thompson was going to enter and had arrived outside the hotel about five minutes earlier, ignoring passing pedestrians as he waited for his target.

Surveillance video shows Mr. Thompson, wearing a blue suit, walking toward the hotel entrance in the predawn dim. The shooter, seen from behind, walks up and fires at least three times, striking Mr. Thompson in the calf and in his back with a pistol that appears to be fitted with a silencer.

The victim manages a couple of steps and turns to face his attacker before collapsing on the sidewalk. The shooter's pistol jams during the shooting, the police said, but the gunman quickly clears the jam and resumes firing.

A woman who is standing nearby flees. The shooter ignores her.

The shooter fiddles with his weapon and walks slowly toward Mr. Thompson, who is crumpled against a wall. He seems to point the gun at Mr. Thompson one last time, then walks away. He breaks into a run only as he crosses the street.

After the shooting, he cut through a pedestrian walkway to West 55th Street and jumped on

Continued on Page A20

HEGSETH ASSERTS HE WON'T GIVE UP AS SUPPORT SWAYS

MEETS WITH SENATORS

Amid Allegations, Trump Said to Like DeSantis in Defense Post

This article is by Maggie Haberman, Jonathan Swan and Michael D. Shear.

Pete Hegseth opened a public campaign on Wednesday to shore up faltering support for his selection as defense secretary, saying in a high-profile interview that President-elect Donald J. Trump told him: "I got your back. It's a fight. They're coming after you."

But even as Mr. Hegseth insisted that Mr. Trump was urging him to fight, the president-elect appeared to be having serious conversations about picking Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor and his onetime primary rival, to be the defense secretary instead.

Mr. Trump has told people close to him that he likes the idea of giving Mr. DeSantis the job, saying it would be a "big story" if he resurrected Mr. DeSantis after defeating him. The president-elect has also praised Mr. DeSantis's ability to run the state of Florida, where



HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
Pete Hegseth has been accused of rape and sexual assault.

Mr. Trump lives, and has mentioned that he is a "Navy guy."

Mr. Trump has privately mentioned Michael Waltz, the Florida congressman he picked as his national security adviser, as another option, pointing out that he would be easily confirmed by the Senate. But people close to Mr. Trump believe that Mr. DeSantis is his favored alternative if he decides to abandon Mr. Hegseth.

Speaking with Megyn Kelly of SiriusXM radio, Mr. Hegseth dismissed allegations of rape, sexual assault, financial mismanagement.

Continued on Page A15

French Far Right and Left Unite In Vote to Oust Prime Minister

By ADAM NOSSITER

PARIS — French lawmakers passed a no-confidence measure against Prime Minister Michel Barnier and his cabinet on Wednesday, sending the country into a fresh spasm of political turmoil that leaves it without a clear path to a new budget and threatens to further jolt financial markets.

France's lower house of Parliament passed the measure with 331 votes, well above the majority of 288 votes that were required, after Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally joined moves by the chamber's leftist coalition to oust the government. Mr. Barnier was expected to resign soon.

It was the first successful no-

confidence vote in France in over 60 years and made Mr. Barnier's three-month-old government the shortest-tenured in the history of France's Fifth Republic.

The vote comes at a difficult time for France, which is struggling with high debt and a widening deficit, challenges that have been compounded by two years of flat growth. France's strong backing for Ukraine faces a challenge with the United States' election of Donald J. Trump, and its partner in leading Europe, Germany, is weaker politically and economically than it has been in years.

President Emmanuel Macron, the nation's top leader, remains in

Continued on Page A6

INTERNATIONAL A4-12

From Chinese Patriot to Spy

John Leung had been hailed by Chinese state media for his efforts to promote Beijing's interests. Then he was found to be an F.B.I. informant.

PAGE A10

BUSINESS B1-5

To Extend or to End?

Ending individual tax cuts made in 2017 would do little to harm the economy, a nonpartisan report found, leaving Republicans in a quandary.

PAGE B1

ARTS C1-8

He Likes the Role of Dad

The "Succession" actor Kieran Culkin has been out and about with awards-season campaigning for the film "A Real Pain." He'd rather be at home.

PAGE C1

THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

NFTs Fall Back to Earth

The giddy craze for nonfungible tokens brought the crypto crowd to art auctions. Now, long after the bubble burst, some people still believe.

PAGE D7

OPINION A22-23

Charles Fain Lehman

PAGE A22



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