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No Guarantees for Kyiv

At his first cabinet meeting, which included Elon Musk, President Trump said Ukraine should look to Europe for security. Page A6.

In Trump Era, Minerals Hunt Turns Zealous

By EDWARD WONG
WASHINGTON — President Trump’s intense interest in Ukraine’s minerals seemed to come from out of the blue. He dispatched his Treasury secretary to Kyiv this month to negotiate with Ukraine’s leader, then began ratcheting up the pressure publicly in what appeared to critics like a Mafia don’s extortion scheme. “I want security of the rare earth,” he said. But critical minerals have been on Mr. Trump’s mind since at least 2017, when he signed an executive order on them during his first term. They also caught the attention of President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

And Mr. Trump’s recent comments on Ukraine’s assets were not the first time in his new term that he has mentioned taking over a country’s mineral holdings. The president has talked about acquiring minerals in Greenland and Canada. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada told a group of business leaders that Mr. Trump’s focus on Canada’s minerals meant his threats to annex the country were “a real thing.”

Seizing mineral wealth overseas has become a core foreign policy goal of Mr. Trump’s and an impetus for his most imperialistic remarks since taking office. His instincts hark back to the drives of fallen empires, when resource extraction motivated rulers to expand territory.

On Tuesday, after nearly two weeks of difficult talks, Ukrainian and U.S. officials said they had reached agreement on a framework for sharing revenue from Ukraine’s critical minerals.

Critical minerals are nonfuel substances that are essential for energy technologies and at high risk of supply-chain disruption, according to the U.S. Energy Department. They are found around the world — including in Chile and Argentina, the Chinese-controlled Tibetan plateau, and the Democratic Republic of Congo — and are integral to common technologies (electric car batteries) and

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F.B.I. Stretched Rules in Scouring Online DNA

By MIKE BAKER
SEATTLE — As investigators struggled for weeks to find who might have committed the brutal stabbings of four University of Idaho students in the fall of 2022, they were focused on a key piece of evidence: DNA on a knife sheath that was found at the scene of the crime. At first they tried checking the DNA with law enforcement databases, but that did not provide a hit. They turned next to the more expansive DNA profiles available in some consumer databases in which users had consented to law enforcement possibly using their

Research Led to Arrest in Idaho Stabbings

information, but that also did not lead to answers. F.B.I. investigators then went a step further, according to newly released testimony, comparing the DNA profile from the knife sheath with two databases that law enforcement officials are not supposed to tap: GEDmatch and MyHeritage. It was a decision that appears to have violated key parameters of a Justice Department policy that

calls for investigators to operate only in DNA databases “that provide explicit notice to their service users and the public that law enforcement may use their service sites.”

It also seems to have produced results: Days after the F.B.I.’s investigative genetic genealogy team began working with the DNA profiles, it landed on someone who had not been on anyone’s radar: Bryan Kohberger, a Ph.D. student in criminology who has now been charged with the murders.

The case has shown both the promise and the unregulated

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RACHEL BUJALSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dr. Bryant Lin created a 10-week medical school course based on his own lung cancer diagnosis.

Terminally Ill, Teacher Offers Final Class, in Life

By KATE SELIG
STANFORD, Calif. — Dr. Bryant Lin stood before his class at Stanford in September, likely one of the last he would ever teach. Just 50 years old and a non-smoker, he had been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer four months earlier. The illness is terminal, Dr. Lin estimated that he had roughly two years left be-

fore the drug he was taking stopped working. Instead of pulling back from work, he chose to spend the fall quarter teaching a course about his own illness. Registration for the class had filled up almost immediately. Now the room was overflowing, with some students forced to sit on the floor and others turned away entirely. “It’s quite an honor for me, hon-

estly,” Dr. Lin said, his voice catching. “The fact that you would want to sign up for my class.” He told his students he wanted to begin with a story that explained why he chose to pursue medicine. He picked up a letter he had received years earlier from a patient dying of chronic kidney disease. The man and his family had made the decision to with-

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Posting on X, Activists Alter U.S. Rules Fast

Conservatives’ Pipeline to Prod Musk’s Team

By ZACH MONTAGUE
WASHINGTON — The demand arrived at 4:28 p.m. Eastern time on Valentine’s Day. “The US government only recognizes two sexes: Male and Female. This needs to be changed immediately,” the popular right-wing account Libs of TikTok posted on X, the social media platform owned by Elon Musk. The missive, blasted to the account’s 4.2 million followers, was accompanied by screenshots of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the government form that determines eligibility for financial assistance in paying for college or trade school. It allowed students to identify as “non-binary” or select “prefer not to answer” when asked to select their gender. The account for Mr. Musk’s so-called Department of Government Efficiency replied five hours later with screenshots of the updated form: “Fixed.”

As his operation targets spending considered unaligned with President Trump’s agenda, Mr. Musk has personally appealed to users of his social media platform to help root out what he has termed “waste, fraud and abuse.” He has been responsive to complaints that go viral, with his team trumpeting the apparent changes pushed through as a result. And for at least two prominent conservative activists, a Trump administration so carefully attuned to right-wing social media has created the opportunity to build an extraordinary pipeline of influence and access.

In multiple instances, viral posts by Chaya Raichik, who is the creator of the Libs of TikTok account and regularly attacks transgender people online, and Christopher Rufo, a writer who has worked to push conservatives further right on education issues, have prompted quick adjustments to public-facing government documents and even policy. Most of their efforts have centered on the Education Department, which Mr. Trump has said he wants to eliminate, though other agencies have become targets, too.

In the case of the FAFSA form, the Education Department had already planned to make those changes to comply with Mr. Trump’s executive order requiring that the government recog-

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TRUMP STRATEGY ENDANGERS SHIFT TO ELECTRIC CARS

TARGETING CALIFORNIA

National Rollback Eyed by Repealing Rules in One State

By LISA FRIEDMAN
WASHINGTON — The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress are preparing an unusual legislative maneuver in an effort to eliminate one of the country’s most ambitious climate policies, an order that was designed to shift the auto industry toward electric cars. They plan to vote to overturn a California ban on the sale of new gasoline-powered cars in that state by 2035. To do it, they intend to use the Congressional Review Act, a 1996 law that permits lawmakers to reverse recently adopted regulations with a simple majority vote. But the California ban is not a federal regulation; it’s a different animal. It’s the result of a waiver that was granted by the Biden administration under the 1970 Clean Air Act, something that has been done more than a hundred times over the years by administrations of both parties. And it is not subject to congressional review, according to a 2023 decision by the Government Accountability Office.

Environmental groups and California officials say the Republican plan to try to kill the waiver with a congressional vote would be illegal. Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, a Democrat who frequently sparred with the president during the first Trump administration and who has promoted his state as an environmental leader, declined

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MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

California aims to ban sales of new gas-powered cars by 2035.

Opinion Editor of Post Resigns As Bezos Curtails Pages’ Scope

By BENJAMIN MULLIN
Jeff Bezos, the owner of The Washington Post, announced a major shift to the newspaper’s opinion section on Wednesday, saying it would now advocate “personal liberties and free markets” and not publish opposing viewpoints on those topics. Mr. Bezos said the section’s editor, David Shipley, was leaving the paper in response to the change. “I am of America and for America, and proud to be so,” Mr. Bezos said. “Our country did not get here by being typical. And a big part of America’s success has been freedom in the economic realm and everywhere else. Freedom is ethical — it minimizes coercion — and practical; it drives creativity, invention and prosperity.” In his note, Mr. Bezos said that

he had asked Mr. Shipley whether he wanted to stay at The Post, and that Mr. Shipley had declined. “I suggested to him that if the answer wasn’t ‘hell yes,’ then it had to be ‘no,’” Mr. Bezos wrote. In a note to the opinion staff, Mr. Shipley said he had decided to step down “after reflection on how I can best move forward in the profession I love.” “I will always be thankful for the opportunity I was given to work alongside a team of opinion journalists whose commitment to strong, innovative, reported commentary inspired me every day,” Mr. Shipley wrote. Mr. Bezos’ decision to curtail the scope of views on The Post’s opinion pages is a major depar-

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Hamas Hands Over Remains

The militant group turned over four coffins it said contained the bodies of Israeli captives, and Israel began releasing Palestinian prisoners. PAGE A8

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Fears of a Postal Takeover

White House officials say they have no immediate plans to take over the service. But the president has hinted at a major reorganization. PAGE A13

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Strike 3! (If the Robot Agrees.)

Major League Baseball is testing an automated challenge system for balls and strikes. Here is what the players and fans should know. PAGE B6

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On Middle Ground in Warsaw

For years, lawmakers pushed Polish cultural institutions to the right. Now, the Museum of Modern Art is trying to avoid the political fray. PAGE C1

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Jessica Grose

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