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What's News

Business & Finance

- ◆ **JetBlue and Spirit** terminated their merger agreement weeks after a judge ruled that the airlines' \$3.8 billion deal would reduce competition and harm cost-conscious fliers. **A1**
- ◆ **The European Union** fined Apple about \$2 billion, saying the iPhone maker set unfair rules for developers of music-streaming apps. **A1**
- ◆ **U.S. stocks slipped**, weighed down by the performance of some tech heavyweights. The S&P 500, Nasdaq and Dow retreated 0.1%, 0.4% and 0.2%, respectively. **B9**
- ◆ **Four former senior** Twitter executives sued Elon Musk, saying he owes them collectively severance in excess of \$128 million. **B1**
- ◆ **Bond traders are** laying down wagers hours ahead of key readings on the U.S. economy, a sign of confidence that they know how new data will shift markets. **B1**
- ◆ **Amazon founder** Jeff Bezos is again the world's richest person, eclipsing Elon Musk and moving to the top of the Bloomberg Billionaires Index for the first time since the fall of 2021. **B2**
- ◆ **An FAA audit in** response to the midflight door-plug blowout on an Alaska Airlines flight found that Boeing failed to comply with certain quality-control requirements. **B3**
- ◆ **American Airlines is** ordering 85 737 MAX jets from Boeing, in a vote of confidence in the plane maker. **B3**
- ◆ **Ford posted a 10.5%** increase in U.S. vehicle sales for February, a result propelled by strong demand for electric and hybrid models. **B3**

World-Wide

- ◆ **The Supreme Court** ruled unanimously that states lack the power to reject presidential candidates on the grounds they engaged in rebellion or insurrection against the U.S., a decision that restored Trump's name to Colorado's ballot and ended similar challenges to his candidacy elsewhere. **A1**
- ◆ **Birth-control pills** without a prescription will be available on retail shelves for the first time in the U.S. this month, in a milestone that reproductive activists have pursued for decades. **A3**
- ◆ **Allen Weisselberg**, the former finance chief of Trump's family business, admitted to lying to investigators handling the former president's civil-fraud case. **A4**
- ◆ **The U.S. and its** Middle East allies are turning to air-drops of food aid into Gaza, a stopgap measure reflecting the impasse foreign powers face in addressing a humanitarian crisis and ending the Israel-Hamas war. **A8**
- ◆ **China terminated** the premier's longstanding annual news briefing, one of the few regular occasions for the public to hear a senior leader discuss affairs of state. **A9**
- ◆ **A federal judge in** Alabama ruled that the Corporate Transparency Act, a sweeping bipartisan anti-money-laundering law passed in 2021, was unconstitutional. **A7**
- ◆ **Massachusetts** Air National Guard member Jack Teixeira pleaded guilty in federal court to leaking highly classified military documents about the war in Ukraine and other national-security secrets. **A2**

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Supreme Court Keeps Trump on Ballot

Justices find states can't bar GOP front-runner over his role in the Capitol attack

By JESS BRAVIN

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court ruled unanimously Monday that states lack the power to reject presidential candidates on the grounds they engaged in rebellion or insurrection against the U.S., a decision that restored former President Donald

Trump's name to Colorado's ballot and ended similar challenges to his candidacy elsewhere.

The unsigned opinion puts to rest a series of state-level claims that Trump, the front-runner for the Republican nomination, isn't eligible to be president a second time under a long dormant constitutional provision barring former officials who engaged in insurrection or rebellion from holding office again.

"The Constitution makes Congress, rather than the States, responsible for enforcing

Section 3 against federal officeholders and candidates," the court said, referring to the disqualification provision, which is part of the 14th Amendment.

Allowing state-by-state determinations of a presidential candidate's eligibility could lead to a chaotic patchwork of outcomes that would disrupt a national election, the court said.

"The result could well be that a single candidate would be declared ineligible in some states, but not others, based on the same conduct," the court said.

While all nine justices

agreed that Trump should appear on the ballot, four of them in separate opinions said the majority had gone too far in limiting ways to enforce the insurrection clause. The court's three liberal members were pointed in their criticism, suggesting the majority had unnecessarily insulated Trump "from future controversy."

That prompted Justice Amy Coney Barrett, a Trump appointee who also didn't embrace all of the decision, to emphasize that the court had come together on the bottom-line outcome. "That is the

message Americans should take home," she wrote.

Trump, speaking at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla., praised Monday's decision as historic, "something that will be spoken about 100 years from now and 200 years from now." He is seeking to retake the presidency.

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- ◆ **Trump's ex-CFO** pleads guilty to perjury..... **A4**
- ◆ **Legal troubles** make some voters love him more..... **A6**
- ◆ **Haley** faces potential last stand..... **A6**

France Adds Right to Abortion to Constitution



AMENDED: Supporters celebrated on Monday as France became the first country to explicitly enshrine abortion rights in its constitution, adding language stating that 'a woman has the guaranteed freedom to have recourse to an abortion.' **A9**

EU Knocks Apple With \$2 Billion Fine

By KIM MACKRAEL

BRUSSELS—The European Union fined Apple about \$2 billion, saying the iPhone maker set unfair rules for developers of music-streaming apps. The fine was one of the EU's largest-ever antitrust penalties.

The move could mark the start of a wider battle between the bloc's regulators and the tech giant.

The European Commission, the EU's executive body, said

it found the company violated antitrust rules by restricting app developers from telling users about alternative ways to subscribe to music-streaming services. The commission said it ordered Apple to change its practices.

"Apple's conduct, which lasted for almost 10 years, may have led many iOS users to pay significantly higher prices for music-streaming subscriptions," the commission said Monday.

Apple said it plans to appeal the decision, which it said was reached "despite the commission's failure to uncover any credible evidence of consumer harm."

Monday's fine is the culmination of a multiyear investigation into Apple's App Store practices and represents one of the largest antitrust penalties ever imposed by the commission against a single company. Alphabet's Google has faced larger fines—of €4.34

billion and €2.42 billion, equivalent to \$4.71 billion and \$2.63 billion respectively—in two separate cases that the tech company has appealed.

Apple's fine of €1.84 billion was larger than some antitrust lawyers had anticipated. The EU's guidance for calculating an antitrust fine allows it to increase the baseline calculation for what the fine should be to deter a company from its behavior.

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Xi Accepts Slowdown, Risking Stagnation

By JONATHAN CHENG

BEIJING—It is the end of the Chinese growth miracle as we know it, and Chinese leader Xi Jinping seems fine with that.

The question now is whether he can steer the country onto a new course—and keep the rest of China on board.

After years of pandemic-era distortions, the longer-term trajectory of the world's second-largest economy is coming into focus, and it is showing a plateauing of growth that would have alarmed previous leaders of China.

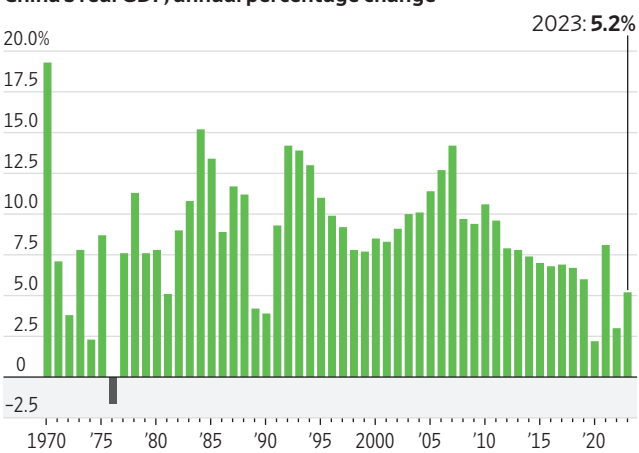
Xi, however, has different priorities. He has made clear in recent years that growth at all costs isn't what he is interested in. What he wants instead is what he calls "high-quality development," a somewhat nebulous concept that economists and advisers say includes a greater emphasis on national security, political stability and social equality.

With his increased focus on ideological purity, he cares less about keeping up appearances for the markets—as evidenced

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- ◆ **Chinese premier's** annual news briefing is axed..... **A9**

China's real GDP, annual percentage change



Sources: World Bank; China's National Bureau of Statistics

Reservation for Six? Good Luck. Try Dinner at Home Instead.

As understaffed eateries turn down groups, consumers also try sneaky workarounds

By ALINA DIZIK

Busy restaurants have a message for customers: Come dine with us. Leave your extra friends at home.

The eateries want your business, of course. But with ongoing staffing shortages, you and your gang of eight or even six are just too much work. Large parties, from couples out for date night to Grandma's 80th birthday, suck up staff time and

reduce a restaurant's ability to turn over tables and make a profit during a period of increasing food costs. You're kinda noisy too, which annoys other customers.

The pushback is leaving consumers both surprised and frustrated. How do you dine family-style with only half the family? Or celebrate a deal with only a few of the office crew?

Some determined diners are now calling it "The gang's not here!"

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Costs Drive Menu Prices Up And Restaurant Owners Out

Escalating payrolls, food prices put operators in a squeeze

By HEATHER HADDON AND RUTH SIMON

A \$16 bacon cheeseburger may not be enough to save your neighborhood bar and grill.

Independent restaurants are on financial life support, owners say, squeezed between escalating payroll costs and diners' dwindling tolerance for ever-higher checks. Wages for waitstaff, table bussers and line cooks will grow more expensive for many eateries this year, with 22 states in January raising the minimum wage for hourly workers.

The industry's economic strains can be seen on the appetizer plate at Chef Zorba's

Restaurant in Denver. Owner Karen LuKanic recently swapped Greek giant beans for homemade stuffed grape leaves to save money, and switched to cheaper shoestring potatoes from thick-cut fries. Denver has increased its minimum wage annually since 2020, most recently in January to \$18.29 an hour, while Colorado has expanded paid sick leave and other employee benefit requirements.

"We are just keeping our head above water," said LuKanic, who estimated about half her restaurant's sales now go to payroll and other employee-related costs.

Chef Zorba's charges \$15.75 for a bacon

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