

FDA delays action on drug for Alzheimer's

Move for more review is a surprise since approval was expected this month

BY DANIEL GILBERT AND DAVID OVALLE

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration delayed regulatory action on an experimental Alzheimer's drug that was widely expected to be approved this month, citing a need for more review to establish its safety and effectiveness, drugmaker Eli Lilly said Friday.

The FDA plans to hold an advisory committee meeting to further scrutinize donanemab, one of the few treatments developed for Alzheimer's disease, a debilitating and incurable affliction that affects some 6 million Americans.

The agency's action reflects a cautious approach, experts said. The FDA drew criticism in 2021 after approving a different Alzheimer's drug that showed conflicting results about its effectiveness. And it comes as public pressure mounts for therapies to fend off the memory-robbing disease, after decades of research have produced only a handful of drugs that aim to slow Alzheimer's progression or treat its symptoms.

The call for additional scrutiny surprised Eli Lilly executives, who said it is unusual for such a review to occur after the FDA has given an anticipated date to make a decision on approval.

"We are confident in donanemab's potential to offer very meaningful benefits to people with early symptomatic Alzheimer's disease," Anne White, an executive vice president at Lilly, said in a statement. The company noted

SEE ALZHEIMER'S ON A13

Wegovy: FDA expands regulatory label of weight-loss drug. **A14**



PHOTOS BY LORENZO TUGNOLI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

To Palestinians, Israeli-occupied West Bank town is 'prison in a prison'

BY LOVEDAY MORRIS, LORENZO TUGNOLI AND SUFIAN TAHA IN HEBRON, WEST BANK

Palestinians stand near a passage that was recently blocked with a fence and barbed wire in the Jaber neighborhood of Hebron in the West Bank.

Aid by sea: Biden's maritime plan meets skepticism. **A10**

To leave their home, the Idris family has to navigate an obstacle course.

"This is our secret way," said Firas Idris, 57, gesturing toward the 12-foot ladder that leads over a garden wall and into the basement of a neighboring building. After two flights of stairs, a door opens onto the street.

The Israeli military blocked off the house in Hebron with razor wire earlier this month, penning in about 20 members of the extended family. Idris said he doesn't know why. The Israel Defense Forces said it was not aware of razor wire being placed outside his home or others on the street.

Since Hamas's deadly attack on Israeli communities around Gaza on Oct. 7, Israel has intensified its military occupation of the West

Bank — through arrests, raids and crippling restrictions on movement.

New orange gates dot the roads, cutting off "almost all" entrances to Palestinian villages and towns, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Since Oct. 7, a total of 45 gates have been added across the West Bank, OCHA said, making a total of 214. Earthen mounds, concrete roadblocks and ad hoc checkpoints also sever communities from main roads.

The impact has been felt acutely in Hebron, population 250,000, the largest Palestinian city outside Gaza. With Israeli settlements clustered in and around its historic center, it has long been one of the most heavily militarized, intensely surveilled parts of

SEE WEST BANK ON A11

U.S. jobs market remains resilient

39TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH OF GAINS

But unemployment rises as workers lose leverage

BY LAUREN KAORI GURLEY

The U.S. economy added 275,000 jobs in February, a sign of continued strength for the jobs market, benefiting workers despite higher interest rates.

The unemployment rate rose from 3.7 percent in January to 3.9 percent, according to the Labor Department's jobs report released Friday, extending the longest stretch of unemployment below 4 percent in decades.

The report, which beat expectations, marked the 39th straight month of job gains — in what economists broadly consider an exceptionally strong recovery from the widespread job losses wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

"The labor market remains undeniably strong," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at the accounting firm RSM. "It's hard to say that there are cracks that have formed or are forming."

As the election year enters full swing, President Biden has repeatedly touted the booming jobs market and easing inflation as a political victory, including in his fiery State of the Union address Thursday night.

"Three years ago, I inherited an economy on the brink," Biden said in a statement Friday about the strong jobs numbers. "Now, our economy is the envy of the world."

And with inflation continuing

SEE JOBS ON A13

ELECTION 2024

Biden's fighting spirit bucks up edgy Democrats

BY DAN BALZ

The annual State of the Union address is always a big moment in the political life of the country, but rarely one that lasts for more than a moment. For President Biden, the challenge ahead will be to turn a high point of his presidency into a sustainable re-election campaign strategy.

Much will depend on Biden himself. His path to reelection against former president Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, will require a combination of style, substance and stamina. One big speech alone cannot erase the questions that have surrounded Biden's candidacy, whether about his age or his capacity to deal with nagging issues facing the country. At a time when worries were particularly acute among nervous Democrats, Biden forcefully allayed them Thursday night. But for how long?

Never has a State of the Union been so obviously seen by a president as a campaign event rather than a report to the nation. That rankled Republicans and no doubt some traditionalists. Biden wasn't worrying about either.

Anticipating a circus atmosphere in the House chamber, which is now the custom, the

president milked the setting from the moment he was announced onto the floor until he finally left as the lights were being turned down and the chamber was nearly empty. He turned his walk down the aisle into a lingering rope-line moment, showing that he was eager to engage with anyone with an outstretched hand or a thought to share, except that of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) in a MAGA (Make America Great Again) hat.

THE TAKE

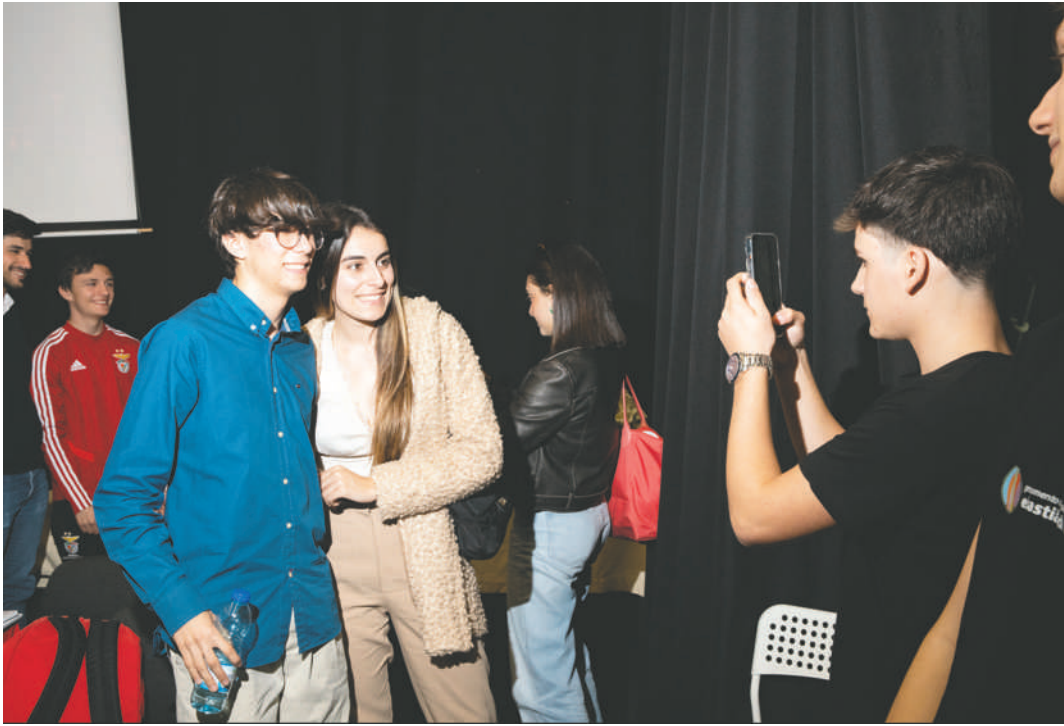
So charged was Biden that when he finally got to the podium, he blew past the traditional introduction that should have been given by House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) — and more applause that would have come with it. Instead of waiting, he plunged directly into a series of contrasts with Trump — or "my predecessor," as he called him throughout the night.

The opening moments focused on aid to Ukraine, the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, a defense of democracy and support for abortion rights. Those contrasts will have to be echoed re-

SEE TAKE ON A5

On the road: The president begins a battleground-state tour. **A5**

Rebuttal: Sen. Katie Boyd Britt's speech baffles Republicans. **A6**



GONÇALO FONSECA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Youth drives a far-right glow-up

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA AND CATARINA FERNANDES MARTINS

SETÚBAL, PORTUGAL — The surprising voters driving the far right's surge in Europe scrambled for selfies inside a suburban auditorium. Rita Matias, 25, an ultraconservative and social media influencer, had just called for migrant quotas and curbs on abortion in a political debate. Now, her more progressive opponents in staid blazers and pull-overs watched like wallflowers as

Social media, glamour draw young Europeans

Rita Matias, 25, an ultraconservative in Portugal, poses for a portrait with students at the Sebastião da Gama High School in Setúbal.

star-struck 18-year-olds jostled for photos with the young woman in a photogenic taupe cardigan.

"Are you a party member?" she asked one fan, who shyly shook his head. "No? Don't worry. We'll get you signed up."

On a continent better known for left-wing youth activism a la Greta Thunberg, polls show that young Europeans are fueling the growth of the far right from France to Sweden to the Netherlands. And in a year when former

SEE PORTUGAL ON A9

Pentagon report finds no evidence of alien visits

BY SHANE HARRIS AND DAN LAMOTHE

A lengthy Defense Department review of U.S. government activities related to "unidentified anomalous phenomena," more commonly known as UFOs, has found no evidence that extraterrestrial intelligence has visited Earth or that authorities have recovered crashed alien spacecraft and are hiding them from the public.

The review, publicly released Friday, covered all official U.S. investigatory efforts from 1945 to the present and examined classified and unclassified government archives.

It was unequivocal in its conclusions, finding "no evidence that any [U.S. government] investigation, academic-sponsored research, or official review panel has confirmed that any sighting of a UAP represented extraterrestrial technology." Reports of flying objects or suspected alien craft usually turned out to have quotidian explanations: They were "ordinary objects and phenomena and the result of misidentification," sometimes by well-meaning witnesses who thought they had spotted something otherworldly.

SEE UFO ON A7

IN THE NEWS

'It's total paralysis' Gangs attacked the main port in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, raising the specter of hunger as a critical lifeline for food and supplies shut down. **A10**

A different sanctuary? Facing shrinking congregations, some churches are looking to convert their spaces to affordable housing. **B1**

THE NATION Mexico gave up daylight saving time, but some in the U.S. want to use it year-round. **A3** **Donald Trump** posted a \$91 million bond to cover a New York defamation judgment. **A7**

THE WORLD We look back at the year through the eyes of women for International Women's Day. **A8** **A former leader** of Honduras was convicted of helping to send cocaine to the U.S. **A9**

THE ECONOMY A new watchdog satellite will sniff out oil and gas companies' methane emissions from space with detailed data. **A12** **The Senate** passed a \$459 billion, six-month funding bill, sending it to President Biden to sign into law and averting a shutdown. **A14**

THE REGION Maryland's budget woes ratcheted up the rhetoric among Democrats, who are split over when to raise taxes. **B1** **A student** has sued the Fairfax school board, alleging that its transgender policies are unconstitutional and violate religious rights. **B1**

STYLE Boosted by TikTok, tweens are delving into complex skin-care routines, but is it needed? **C1**

SPORTS The Capitals traded Evgeny Kuznetsov to the Hurricanes at the NHL's trade deadline, ending the center's 11-season tenure with the team. **D1**

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