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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **The U.S. auto industry** rebounded in 2023 with many car companies reporting double-digit sales gains, marking a return to normalcy for a sector that has been on a roller coaster since the start of the pandemic. **A1**

◆ **Minutes of the Fed's** Dec. 12-13 meeting offered no timetable for interest-rate cuts, though they showed officials thought rate increases were at an end. **A2**

◆ **Major U.S. stock** indexes fell, with the S&P 500 and Dow industrials both declining 0.8% and the Nasdaq retreating 1.2%. **B1**

◆ **Cigna is in** advanced talks to sell its Medicare business in an about-face for the health-insurance giant, which had been expanding its footprint in the sector. **B1**

◆ **Airbus is in** talks to buy Atos's cybersecurity unit, with an indicative, or non-binding, offer that values the business at up to the equivalent of \$1.97 billion and includes debt. **B3**

◆ **Walt Disney won** the support of a key shareholder in its fight with Nelson Peltz over the direction of the company, and is confronting a third shareholder now jockeying for influence. **B1**

◆ **An official for** the U.S. labor-relations agency accused SpaceX of violating a federal workplace law by firing employees who circulated a letter criticizing founder Elon Musk. **B3**

◆ **Xerox Holdings said** it would reduce its workforce by 15% and shake up its leadership team as it reorganizes its operating model. **B3**

World-Wide

◆ **Trump asked** the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the decision by Colorado's highest court that removed him from the state's 2024 presidential primary ballot because of his actions surrounding the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol. **A3**

◆ **The Biden administration** sued the state of Texas and Gov. Abbott, arguing that a new law allowing the state to arrest and deport migrants who cross into the state illegally is an unconstitutional violation of federal-government authority. **A5**

◆ **House Republicans** traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas to rail against what they said were failures of the Biden administration to stem record flows of migrants. **A5**

◆ **A U.S. judge** unsealed the names of dozens of people who appeared in testimony or depositions connected to an old lawsuit filed by one of Jeffrey Epstein's accusers. **A3**

◆ **The U.S. is seeking** to base military drones along the West African coast in an effort to stop the spread of al Qaeda and Islamic State in the region, American and African officials said. **A16**

◆ **Russia and Ukraine** exchanged hundreds of prisoners of war in the biggest single release of captives since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022. **A16**

◆ **Taiwan's defense** ministry said it detected four Chinese balloons floating over the island over the course of two days and said it was closely monitoring the situation. **A16**

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At Least 95 Killed in Blasts at Ceremony in Iran



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DEADLY SCENE: Iran said at least 95 people were killed in explosions near a public ceremony Wednesday commemorating the death of Qassem Soleimani, a senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps officer killed in 2020 by a U.S. airstrike. **A6**

Slain Hamas Leader Oversaw Ties With Tehran, Hezbollah

By OMAR ABDEL-BAQUI
AND SUMMER SAID

The killing of a senior Hamas leader in a suspected Israeli strike marked the biggest hit to the group's top leadership in years, taking out a key player who was responsible for aligning the Palestinian militant group with Iran and its proxies.

Saleh al-Arouri's killing in Lebanon on Tuesday night is likely to hinder the group's diplomatic efforts with key partners like Iran but won't substantially affect the war

between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, military analysts said.

Arouri, a religious hardliner, was credited by Hamas with orchestrating the Oct. 7 attack on Israel that left 1,200 people dead, mostly civilians, according to Israeli officials. He also played a leading role in negotiating with Israel through Qatar and Egypt for the release of Israeli hostages in exchange for a cease-fire in Gaza, taking a more uncompromising approach, according to negotiators.

Israel hasn't claimed responsibility for the killing,

which took place in a neighborhood with a heavy Hezbollah presence south of Beirut. But the head of Israeli spy agency Mossad warned on Wednesday that Israel would target anyone involved in the planning of the Oct. 7 attack. Mossad chief David Barnea said Israel's intelligence organization "is obligated to settle accounts with the murderers who raided Gaza border communities on Oct. 7, with the planners and with those who sent them."

A spokesman for the U.S. State Department, Matthew

Miller, said Wednesday that Arouri "was a brutal terrorist who was centrally responsible for the attacks of October 7, as well as other attacks against innocent civilians." He said that the U.S. didn't receive advance warning about the strike. Arouri was the most prominent voice inside Hamas advocating a closer relationship with Iran and is credited with helping build what is known as the "Axis of Resistance," an

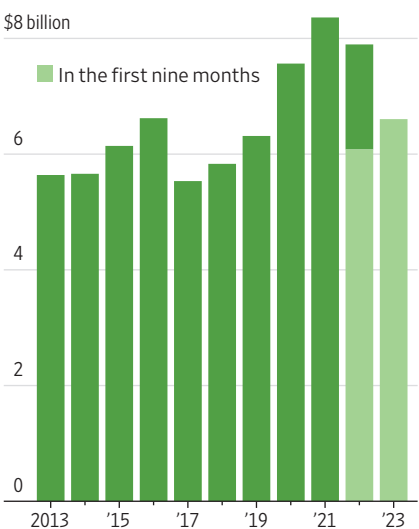
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◆ **Houthis are warned to** stop sea attacks..... **A6**

Cigna Nears Deal

Cigna is in talks to sell its Medicare Advantage business to Health Care Service Corp. for between \$3 billion and \$4 billion, according to people familiar with the matter. The move marks an about-face for the health-insurance giant in a fast-growing sector where it had been expanding. **B1**

Cigna's annual Medicare Advantage premiums revenue



The West Needs Missiles, But Makers Are Backlogged

Factories are short of parts, workers as rising threats drive orders

By ALISTAIR MACDONALD,
DOUG CAMERON AND DASL YOON

KONGSBERG, Norway—A factory here west of Oslo produces a missile-defense system that can shoot down drones, helicopters and other airborne threats from almost 25 miles away.

Capable of launching 72 missiles into the sky at once, the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System, or Nasams, is what protects the airspace over the White House. When first deployed in Ukraine in 2022, it recorded a 100% success rate shooting down

cruise missiles and drones in its first few months.

With the West confronting a rising number of potential threats, including Russia and China, orders are piling up for the Nasams from Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace.

"I've never seen anywhere near so much demand," said Eirik Lie, a 30-year Kongsberg veteran who is president of the company's defense unit, on a November tour of the factory.

New customers, though, will have to wait: It takes two years to make one Nasams, and

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Aboard Burning Plane: Fear, Chaos, Fortitude

TOKYO—It was 18 minutes of terror, confusion and determination to get out alive.

A blaze was spreading in the back of the plane and smoke was filling the cabin. The realization began to dawn on the

aren't a good recipe. Everyone is trying to push to the front."

In tests, aircraft manufacturers must show they can evacuate a plane in 90 seconds. Real life is usually harder.

Between 5:47 p.m. and 6:05 p.m. on Tuesday at Tokyo's Haneda Airport, some things went wrong. It took several minutes to get the Japan Airlines plane's doors open. The PA system didn't work. Most of the evacuation chutes weren't available.

But a lot went right. Once the doors were open, passengers calmed down and followed directions. The airline said it was prepared to stop people who tried to bring along bulky carry-on luggage—a vexing human instinct that has bedeviled previous evacuations—and wasn't aware of anyone who did it. Although the rear of the Airbus A350

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INSIDE



TOM LOUAT/GETTY IMAGES

SPORTS

Meet the newest sports prodigy: a 16-year-old darts ace from northern England. **A12**



GILLES SAGRE FOR WSJ

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Thin margins squeeze Shein and Temu suppliers in China's manufacturing hubs. **B1**

Is Wearing Socks to Bed Healthier or Just Psychopathic?

Covering the tootsies might help us catch zzz's, but many call the idea a nightmare

By MENGQI SUN

Before going to sleep in a hotel room he shared with his brother recently, Matthew Johnson slipped wool socks over his feet. *He did what?*

"My brother saw me putting on socks, and he was like, 'That's crazy. You're a crazy person,'" says Johnson, who is a senior at George Mason University in Virginia.

A growing understanding of the importance of sleep for health and lifespan has made slumber hacks and gadgets all the buzz—including the increasingly common advice to sleep with socks.

But an under-cover inquiry by The Wall Street Journal finds that socks-in-bed is di-

viding couples and the public square. Opponents physically recoil at the notion, and say people who snooze in socks can't be trusted.

"That's just psychopathic behavior right there, wearing socks to bed," says Sean McMahon, a 32-year-old retail worker in Deltona, Fla., who called a former roommate weird for doing so. He recalls once watching a murder-mystery movie where a character wearing socks to sleep was the killer.

In Virginia, Johnson wasn't always a socker. He wore them—a pair of generic Walmart socks—to sleep for the first time after reading about the benefits. The first night, "it feels like you've put

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Not sole mates