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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **Intel Chief Executive** Pat Gelsinger retired abruptly, ending a nearly four-year run that saw the chip maker fall behind rivals in building semiconductors to power the artificial-intelligence boom. **A1**

◆ **The S&P 500 and Nasdaq** rose to records in the first trading session of December, gaining 0.2% and 1%, respectively, while the Dow fell 0.3%. **B11**

◆ **Manufacturing activity** in the U.S. contracted for an eighth-straight month in November, albeit at a less sharp pace. **A2**

◆ **Investors have flocked** to a pair of turbocharged exchange-traded funds to ride the bitcoin momentum, but they contain hidden risks that aren't widely understood. **A1**

◆ **GM backed out of** a nearly completed electric-vehicle battery plant in Michigan, agreeing to unload its stake in the facility to its Korean partner, LG Energy Solution. **B1**

◆ **A Delaware judge upheld** her earlier ruling striking down Elon Musk's multibillion-dollar pay package after Tesla shareholders approved the package for a second time. **B1**

◆ **Workers at VW sites** in Germany participated in warning strikes as a conflict with management escalated over the carmaker's plans to slash jobs, cut pay and close factories. **B3**

◆ **Super Micro Computer** said a final review showed no evidence of fraud or misconduct by its management or board relating to accounting issues that have dragged on the stock. **B4**

◆ **Bowlero will rename** itself Lucky Strike Entertainment to de-emphasize its bowling-alley operations as it expands into other leisure sectors. **B3**

World-Wide

◆ **Syrian government** warplanes struck near and inside Aleppo in northwest Syria, state media and rescue workers said, as the Assad regime moved to repel rebels who took control of the city in a lightning offensive. **A7**

◆ **The U.S. introduced** its latest rules on transferring advanced chips to China, but a delay between their drafting and their release allowed Chinese entities to stock up on gear they knew was likely to be restricted. **A3**

◆ **Irish voters re-elected** the two center-right parties that have dominated politics in the country since its independence, bucking a trend in many democracies of turning against incumbents. **A16**

◆ **The U.S. is preparing** to send Ukraine an additional \$725 million in military assistance, including counter-drone systems and munitions for its High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. **A16**

◆ **Taiwan's president held** virtual meetings with U.S. politicians and gave a speech that appeared to respond to some of the criticisms that Trump has directed at Taipei. **A16**

◆ **A scientific journal** detailed the discovery of a mummified saber-toothed cat cub in the Siberian permafrost, the first of its kind ever found. **A16**

◆ **A stampede at** a sports stadium in Guinea left at least 56 people dead in the West African country, officials and witnesses said. **A16**

◆ **Hawaii crime boss** Michael Miske, who was convicted of racketeering charges last summer, died in prison, authorities said. **A2**

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Le Pen Threatens to Topple French Government



STANDOFF: Far-right leader and member of parliament Marine Le Pen spoke with reporters Monday as she was set to back a no-confidence vote that could topple the government if it doesn't soften the impact of its planned budget on taxpayers. **A7**

Biden Pardon of Son Attacked, Fallout Hangs Over His Legacy

By Aaron Zitner

WASHINGTON—Joe Biden made the central purpose of his presidency clear in his inauguration Day address: “We have learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile,” he said at the Capitol, where a violent mob had tried that month to overturn his 2020 election victory. Biden’s aim would be to unify the nation and shore up its democratic institutions.

That is one reason why the president’s pardon of his son, Hunter Biden, on Sunday threatens to further damage his already tarnished legacy:

The reprieve he ordered risks undercutting one of the main propositions he offered for his election.

Biden’s political brand as a presidential candidate—his value proposition as a leader—was largely a promise to restore democratic norms and to fight the cynicism that had helped Donald Trump build his MAGA movement on claims that self-dealing leaders had corrupted the government. Biden had repeatedly promised to respect the independence of the justice system and avoid interfering with the prosecution of his son, including by issuing a pardon.

His reversal “is not fully consonant with what he ran on,” said Jim Kessler, executive vice president for policy at Third Way, a centrist Democratic group. While Kessler said he empathized with Biden’s impulses to protect his son, the pardon comes as Trump will soon retake office on promises to overhaul a criminal justice system that he says unfairly targeted him and his followers. To lead the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Trump has nominated Kash Patel, a loyalist who has said he would fire its senior leaders and prosecute agents he thinks abused their authority.

Trump has pledged to pardon people convicted in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol and seek “retribution” against his political opponents, which Democrats say threatens the independent disposition of justice. The Hunter Biden pardon “clouds the message” that Democrats will employ to protest those moves, Kessler said.

Others said the pardon will make it hard for Democrats to criticize Trump for pardons he issued to political supporters during his first term, or about his use of the justice system when he returns to office, in-
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Stock Bets Riding Euphoria Of Bitcoin Mask Risk

By Jack Pitcher

Investors have flocked to a pair of turbocharged exchange-traded funds to ride the momentum in bitcoin, but they contain hidden risks that aren't widely understood.

The ETFs seek to amplify the daily return of MicroStrategy, the software company that has turned itself into a bitcoin buying machine. Using complex derivative bets, they aim to offer double the daily return of the stock—to the upside or downside.

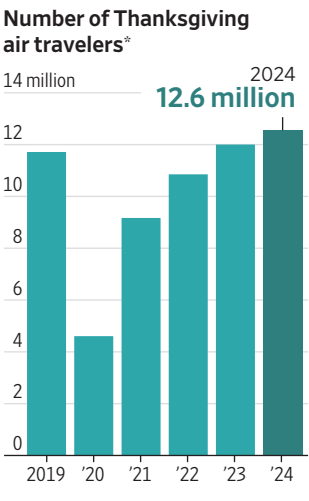
The funds, from asset managers Tuttle Capital Management and Defiance ETFs, are inherently risky. MicroStrategy itself is a leveraged bet on bitcoin, holding some \$35 billion of the cryptocurrency. But bullish investors have swelled its market value to almost \$90 billion, or more than twice the value of the bitcoin it holds. Skeptics say this is unsustainable.

The Defiance Daily Target 2X Long MSTR ETF and the T-Rex 2X Long MSTR Daily Target ETF were designed for investors who want to place an even more aggressive bet on the stock. Collectively, the two funds have ballooned to roughly \$5 billion in assets since launching in August and September respectively.

Some analysts say the funds are contributing to the furious rally in MicroStrategy shares. They warn that if the stock
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Air Travel Sets Record

Sunday set a record for most air travelers in a single day, as Thanksgiving weekend travel rose from last year. **A3**



Musk's Rivals Fear He Will Retaliate Against Them

From automakers and tech giants to OpenAI's Sam Altman, the incoming president's 'First Buddy' has a long enemies list

As the summer drew to a close, Sam Altman thought his relationship with his OpenAI co-founder Elon Musk was in a good place.

Musk had sued him earlier in the year for allegedly betraying OpenAI's nonprofit mission, but withdrew the suit a few months af-

By Keach Hagey, Emily Glazer and Dana Mattioli

ter the two spent part of an evening huddled around a fire pit on the sidelines of a March technology conference in Big Sky, Mont. Their amicable chat ended in a hug, according to people at the conference.

Even after Musk refilled the suit in August, the long-volatile relationship seemed manageable. After all, Musk had a long track

record of picking fights then moving on.

Then came Donald Trump's electoral victory and Musk's transformation into what some describe as a shadow president. After plowing \$200 million into Trump's campaign, Musk dubbed himself on X as the incoming president's "First Buddy."

Since the election, people close to Musk have said he despises Altman. Musk has cranked up the heat on their feud, filing an expanded version of his lawsuit calling OpenAI a "market-paralyzing gorgon." Musk also pinned his personal correspondence with Altman to his X account and gave Altman his own Trump-style nickname on X:
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◆ **Judge rejects Musk's Tesla pay plan.....** **B1**

China EV Maker Works A Side Hustle for Apple

By Yang Jie

Apple products say on the box “assembled in China,” leaving who did the assembling a mystery. Owners of a new iPad might be surprised to learn one of the answers: China's biggest electric-vehicle maker.

BYD, known globally as Tesla's most formidable EV competitor, has a second business manufacturing electronics, and it has grown to assemble more than 30% of Apple's tablets, according to industry executives and analysts.

The Chinese company said it has more than 10,000 engineers and around 100,000 employees dedicated to the “fruit

Intel CEO Resigns As Stock, Strategy Falter

Turnaround plans missed AI boom, spelling trouble for storied tech giant

By Dean Seal and Sarah E. Needleman

Intel Chief Executive Pat Gelsinger retired abruptly, ending a nearly four-year run that saw the chip maker fall behind rivals in building semiconductors to power the artificial-intelligence boom.

The company on Monday said it named Chief Financial Officer David Zinsner and Michelle Johnston Holthaus, general manager of Intel's client computing group, as interim co-CEOs. The board has formed a search committee to find a permanent successor to Gelsinger, 63 years old, who stepped down Sunday.

Gelsinger's exit comes in the middle of his multiyear turnaround strategy to build a so-called foundry business manufacturing chips for other companies. At the same time, Intel's stock has underperformed the market and rivals.

Strategic missteps and missing out on the artificial-intelligence boom have combined to reshape the fortunes of the company, which reportedly was a takeover target earlier this year. “We know that we have much more work to do at the company and are committed to restoring investor confidence,” said Frank Yeary, independent chair of Intel's board.

The change in leadership indicates the board wants to move in a new direction, but what that means isn't clear, Bernstein Research analyst Stacy Rasgon said.

“Is the focus on manufacturing going to start to wane? Will
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