

## In Moscow, Modi, Putin embrace close ties

A show of unity despite U.S. attempts to isolate the Russian leader

BY GERRY SHIH,  
MARY ILYUSHINA  
AND CATHERINE BELTON

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been hosted by President Biden at a state dinner and lavished with praise by White House officials, who describe ties with India as “one of the most consequential relationships” for the United States.

But this week, Modi reminded the world that he has another close relationship — with “my dear friend Vladimir Putin.”

As Modi makes his first visit to Russia since Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the images emerging from Moscow of Modi wrapping the Russian president in a hug send a clear signal that the South Asian giant will maintain deep ties with Russia despite the Biden administration’s efforts to woo its prime minister. It also shows that Putin is not as isolated as the White House has hoped.

The trip to Moscow, which overlapped with three days of NATO meetings in Washington, was met with consternation in Washington and Kyiv. Asked about the Modi-Putin meeting, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters at a press briefing: “We have made quite clear directly with India our concerns about their relationship with Russia.”

On X, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky posted photos of a children’s hospital in Kyiv that was struck by a Russian missile on Monday and criticized the meeting. “It is a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world’s largest democracy hug the world’s most

SEE INDIA ON A13



SUSAN WALSH/AP

President Biden delivers remarks on the 75th anniversary of NATO in D.C. on Tuesday. Leaders of the alliance’s 32 nations descended upon the U.S. capital ahead of a multiday summit and attempted to refocus attention away from Ukraine’s gloomy battlefield outlook.

## Fearful or resolute, Hill Democrats split on Biden

BY MARIANA ALFARO,  
MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR  
AND JACQUELINE ALEMANY

As President Biden prepared to address NATO allies gathered in Washington on Tuesday evening, his advocates on Capitol Hill seemed to be growing a bit louder. But so was the unease over Democratic prospects of beating Donald Trump and making gains in Congress come November.

There was no unity among congressional Democrats who met personally for the first time since Biden’s halting debate performance nearly two weeks ago.

In-person meetings bring no consensus on president’s future

Instead, there was a rising tide of resignation from some, enthusiasm from others — and despair and anger from still more — that the president would remain atop the ticket and be their nominee in November. Hill Democrats were also holding their breath ahead of a rare Thursday news conference, the first time since the debate that the president planned to

entertain freewheeling questions from the press.

Before a meeting of Senate Democrats, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.), co-chair of Biden’s campaign, said the president had heard the message from lawmakers that he needed to get out and do more events and interviews.

“We need to remember that President Biden for 30 years has been someone who has a stutter, who occasionally misspeaks ... and not judge him by too high a standard,” Coons said.

In many ways, things stayed somewhat steady in terms of Biden’s fate on Capitol Hill, where Rep. Mikie Sherrill — who

represents a competitive New Jersey district — became the 10th House member to publicly or privately call on Biden to abandon his reelection campaign.

“I know that President Biden and his team have been true public servants and have put the country and the best interests of democracy first and foremost in their considerations,” Sherrill said in a lengthy statement. “And

SEE BIDEN ON A7

**Still in his corner:** For several Democrats, it’s Biden or bust. **A5**

**Cognitive tests:** What the exams measure and what they tell us. **A6**

## NATO steps up its aid for Kyiv

BUT ALLIANCE WON’T PLEDGE MEMBERSHIP

Five more air-defense systems arriving soon

BY MISSY RYAN,  
MICHAEL BIRNBAUM,  
EMILY RAUHALA  
AND ELLEN NAKASHIMA

NATO nations will provide Ukraine urgently needed air-defense systems, President Biden said Tuesday, vowing aid to shield against deadly Russian attacks even as the alliance stops short of offering Kyiv concrete advances toward membership.

The U.S. leader, kicking off a summit marking the 75th anniversary of NATO, said the donation of five air-defense systems by Germany, Italy, Romania, the Netherlands and the United States represented just one element of NATO’s ongoing campaign to help Kyiv hold off a far larger, better-armed adversary.

“Make no mistake; Russia is failing,” Biden said. “The war will end with Ukraine remaining a free and independent country.”

The immediacy of Ukraine’s needs was starkly apparent Monday when Russian missiles slammed into a pediatric hospital in Kyiv and other sites, killing dozens in an attack involving dozens of missiles, some of which evaded Ukrainian defenses.

In a speech Tuesday evening at the Ronald Reagan Institute, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was “grateful” for the new air defense but focused much of his remarks on urging the United States to allow

SEE NATO ON A11

**Zelensky reacts:** Ukraine’s leader “grateful” for NATO’s decision. **A11**

## Munro family sexual abuse was known in author’s circle

‘I knew this day was going to come,’ her biographer says of fallout

BY SOPHIA NGUYEN

Additional dismay reverberated through the literary world on Tuesday as it came to light that a biographer and others



Alice Munro

had known for years that Nobel Prize-winning Canadian writer Alice Munro, who died in May at 92, had long kept secret that her second husband sexually abused one of her daughters.

In an essay published last weekend in the Toronto Star, Andrea Robin Skinner, a daughter of Munro’s, wrote that her

SEE MUNRO ON A20

**Essay:** Author’s work is saturated with neglect and abandonment. **C1**

### THE DROWNING SOUTH

## A RISING FORTRESS ON SINKING LAND

A huge sea wall around a gas plant shows the tension between climate change and energy demand

BY STEVEN MUFSON  
IN PLAQUEMINES PARISH, LA.

The marshes that blanket this pancake-flat parish south of New Orleans stretch for miles, strewn with small streams that flow into the Gulf of Mexico. A lone four-lane road goes south past a Navy air base, an idle industrial site, a coal export terminal and a handful of small storm-battered communities.

Then, suddenly, a gigantic facility rises from the wetlands. Cranes dot the skyline. They hover over crews that are installing a jumble of pipes, pumps, storage tanks and two 720-megawatt power plants — equipment needed to freeze natural gas into a liquid form so it can be shipped around the world.

It might seem like a risky location for a \$21 billion liquefied natural gas plant, given this region’s ferocious hurricanes and sea levels that are rising faster than almost anywhere else on the planet. But the company building this plant, Arlington, Va.-based Venture Global, says it has an answer to these threats: a 26-foot-high steel sea wall that surrounds the 632-acre site, twice the size of Washington’s National Mall.

SEE SEA WALL ON A8



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

The Plaquemines liquefied natural gas plant is under construction in Port Sulphur, La. The company behind the project, Venture Global, is protecting the site from sea level rise with a steel wall descending 60 feet underground and rising 26 feet above.

## Immunity case shows risk of Jack Smith’s approach

Conservative justices often oppose how public corruption is charged

BY DEVLIN BARRETT

The Supreme Court decision on former president Donald Trump’s claims of presidential immunity has put new limits on future prosecutors — constraints that legal experts see as the latest and most consequential result of a long-running disagreement between conservative justices and the Justice Department over how to investigate public corruption.

The ruling leaves some conservative lawyers questioning special counsel Jack Smith’s decision last year to indict Trump for a range of actions leading up to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol. Those charges ultimately led to a Supreme Court ruling weakening not just Smith’s authority but that of future special counsels who investigate presidents.

The high court ruled 6-3 along

SEE SMITH ON A20

### IN THE NEWS

**Beryl recovery** Power outages for hundreds of thousands in Houston will probably stretch for days, officials said, as residents of one senior complex sweltered without help. **A3**

**Youngkin targets phones** The Virginia governor called for statewide guidance aimed at limiting students’ use of the devices. **B1**

**THE NATION**  
**To save** the spotted owl, officials plan to kill 450,000 invasive owls, dividing advocates. **A2**  
**Three** of Donald Trump’s VP finalists, who now praise him, once bashed him. **A4**

**THE WORLD**  
**Many bouts** of extreme weather have awakened China’s policymakers to climate change. **A10**  
**Hospitals** in northern Gaza are struggling amid a renewed Israeli military offensive. **A12**

**THE ECONOMY**  
**This family** uses budget spreadsheets, checking accounts and other tools to help their children understand the value of money. **A14**  
**A new ruling** from the Supreme Court raised hurdles for the Biden administration’s plan to take on tech giants. **A16**

**THE REGION**  
**To help fulfill** a billion-dollar U.S. plan to forest urban areas, a D.C. arborist is tasked with selecting trees that can thrive in harsh yards. **B1**  
**D.C. legislators** passed a measure to test a new approach to keeping truant teens in school, rather than in court. **B1**

**SPORTS**  
**Cooper Flagg**, the 17-year-old prodigy, stole the show at USA Basketball camp, impressing the team going to the Paris Olympics. **D1**  
**FOOD**  
**Hamptons** private chefs were a social media sensation — but they’ve got staying power.

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