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What's News

Business & Finance

- ◆ **Meta executives pressed** U.S. trade officials to fight against an expected European Union fine and cease-and-desist order that could undermine the company's ad business. **A1**
- ◆ **Meta's head of AI** research, Joelle Pineau, will leave the company in May after overseeing the division for nearly eight years. **B4**
- ◆ **Major U.S. stock indexes** ended mixed, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq rising 0.4% and 0.9%, respectively, and the Dow slipping less than 0.1%. **B14**
- ◆ **U.S. manufacturing** activity fell back into contraction in March, reflecting renewed concerns about cost pressures and demand. **A2**
- ◆ **Eurozone inflation** edged closer to the ECB's 2% target last month, while U.K. shop prices continued to decline, though at a slower pace. **A6**
- ◆ **Visa offered Apple** roughly \$100 million to get the tech giant's credit card amid a fierce fight among issuers and networks to assume or retain a role with the card. **B1**
- ◆ **Trump will be briefed** on a plan to keep TikTok operating ahead of a pending U.S. deadline, with Oracle and Blackstone joining other investors to make an offer to TikTok-owner ByteDance. **A2**
- ◆ **A bankruptcy judge** dismissed Johnson & Johnson's third attempt to resolve its mass talc liabilities through chapter 11, citing a flawed vote-solicitation process. **B3**
- ◆ **A startup founder** who was convicted of defrauding JPMorgan Chase in a \$175 million deal was deemed a flight risk and ordered to wear an ankle monitor. **B3**

World-Wide

- ◆ **The Trump administration** began broad staff cuts at the Health and Human Services Department, locking some workers out of federal buildings and reassigning others to new agencies. **A1**
- ◆ **Elon Musk's** investment in a Wisconsin Supreme Court election didn't pay off after Democrats secured a victory that could tarnish his political clout, while GOP candidates won two special elections for House seats in Florida. **A4**
- ◆ **Princeton University** said the Trump administration is suspending funding for research grants, making it the fourth Ivy League school to be targeted by the president. **A3**
- ◆ **The law firm where** former Vice President Kamala Harris's husband, Doug Emhoff, is a partner struck a deal with the Trump administration after other firms became targets of punitive executive orders. **A4**
- ◆ **The Trump administration** deported a man to a prison in El Salvador in what it said was an administrative error that it can't reverse, officials said in court filings. **A3**
- ◆ **The administration** is pursuing agreements with several more countries to take migrants deported from the U.S. **A3**
- ◆ **Attorney General Pam Bondi** directed prosecutors to seek the death penalty against Luigi Mangione, the accused killer of UnitedHealthcare executive Brian Thompson. **A3**
- ◆ **House Speaker Mike Johnson** failed to tamp down a revolt by some rank-and-file Republicans trying to bypass his authority over a narrow proxy-voting proposal. **A5**

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Liberal Wins Wisconsin Race in Blow to Musk



STATES OF PLAY: People voted in Eau Claire, Wis., in a state Supreme Court election won by a Democratic-aligned judge whom Trump ally Elon Musk had spent heavily to defeat. Republicans held on to two U.S. House seats in Florida. **A4 and WSJ.com.**

Threat of New Tariffs Mobilizes Car Shoppers to Buy in a Hurry

By CHRISTOPHER OTTS

Business was robust over the weekend at Rhett Ricart's four auto dealerships around Columbus, Ohio. So was the volume of incoming phone calls, with many customers asking about tariffs.

"One out of four of the people who called in were talking about tariffs—'Does this car have a tariff on it? A Hyundai? A Kia? A Nissan?' That's what they wanted to know about," Ricart said.

Automakers' monthly U.S. sales tallies, announced on Tuesday, offered an early

look at how President Trump's spate of threatened vehicle tariffs has affected car shopping. With Trump set to announce his tariff plan Wednesday, his team was weighing an across-the-board levy on a subset of nations as a middle ground between a threatened 20% universal tariff and a reciprocal plan that would apply different levies to different countries.

Some auto consumers have accelerated their purchase decisions to avoid higher prices that could stem from tariffs, analysts and dealers say. Re-

search firm J.D. Power said that tariff concerns were behind a forecast 13% surge in new vehicle sales by individual buyers during March.

Most analysts expect the sales bump to be short-lived if tariffs take effect and remain in place. The potential for higher prices would likely disrupt a two-year recovery in U.S. car sales, after pandemic-related supply-chain problems snarled sales, analysts say.

In March, Hyundai Motor's U.S. retail sales surged 15%, marking the best performance for the month in the auto-

maker's history. The South Korean automaker, which leans heavily on Mexico for its current lineup, in a news release highlighted a recently opened factory in Georgia.

Randy Parker, head of Hyundai's North America business, told reporters that this past weekend was the busiest he can remember in more than 15 years. "Lots of people I think rushed in, this

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◆ **Opportunity opens for Brazil in trade war..... A2**
 ◆ **Heard on the Street: Trading on tariffs is risky play..... B15**

Zuckerberg Seeks Aid Of Trump In Battle Against EU

By SAM SCHECHNER AND KIM MACKRAEL

Mark Zuckerberg was quick to jump on board with President Trump earlier this year. Now he is calling in a favor.

After Trump's election, the Meta Platforms chief executive embraced the incoming president's priorities. He scrapped Meta's diversity team, ended its fact-checking program and appointed UFC President Dana White, a Trump ally, to its board. Clad in a maroon tie, Zuckerberg was among several Silicon Valley CEOs present for Trump's inauguration.

In recent weeks, in one of Zuckerberg's first specific asks since Trump took office, Meta executives have pressed U.S. trade officials to fight against an expected European Union fine and cease-and-desist order, people familiar with the conversations said.

The expected decision relates to whether Meta should be forced to give Facebook and Instagram users the option of accessing those services free without seeing personalized ads, something that would undercut the main way Meta makes money.

Meta's goal is to push the Trump administration, which is readying a new package of tariffs expected to hit the EU and others on Wednesday, to respond aggressively against what the company says would be a discriminatory decision, the people added. Meta hopes U.S. pressure will persuade

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INSIDE
SPORTS
An MIT scientist invented the bats that are now blowing up baseball. **A14**

Whiskey-Drinking Rocker Recast as al Qaeda Leader

A militant leader helped write a hit song before leading an Islamist army that has killed tens of thousands in West Africa

By BENOIT FAUCON AND MICHAEL M. PHILLIPS

Back in the day, Iyad ag Ghali wrote lyrics for a flamboyant blues-rock band from the heart of the Sahara. He jammed with the guys in the group, pounding out the beat on metal jerrycans, and frequented West African nightclubs.

The band, Tinariwen, went on to win a Grammy, tour the world and play with the likes of Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant and U2's Bono.

Ag Ghali went on to become the leader of

one of the most dangerous al Qaeda franchises in the world, banning music in a swath of West Africa the size of Montana and commanding an army of extremists responsible for tens of thousands of deaths.

"It was a huge shock when I saw footage of him walking over corpses," said the band's former manager, Manny Ansar, who went clubbing with ag Ghali in Mali's capital, Bamako, 30 years ago.

Ag Ghali has turned West Africa into the primary battlefield where the West and local

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Tariffs Gave These TikTokers An Unlikely Career Boost

Trump's rapid-fire policy shifts turn normally esoteric subject into hot topic

By JOHN KEILMAN

New York comedian Walter Masterson mines much of his material from hot-button political topics like abortion, immigration and the Israel-Hamas conflict. But nothing has captivated his on-line audience quite like federal import duties on beans and corn.

Masterson waded into the relatively prosaic world of tariffs in January, recording a street corner debate with a man who insisted foreign governments pay the duties.

A bystander who said he was an importer-exporter jumped into the conversation, explaining in detail how the levies are paid by companies

bringing in the goods.

The entry-level economics exchange has been viewed seven million times on YouTube and more than 28 million times on TikTok—Masterson's biggest hit by far.

Viewership spikes every time President Trump brings up tariffs. "I think there are people sending my videos to someone else to try and get them to understand how this works," said Masterson, whose videos often poke fun at conservatives.

The TikTok appeal of tariffs might never match that of a trendy dance or an elaborate prank, but they're proving to be a potent topic for social-media personalities and trade

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