



Dark cloud hangs over vaccine developers

Kennedy's skepticism has created a difficult environment for research

BY DANIEL GILBERT
AND CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON

Vaxcyte had high hopes for a vaccine in early stages of development that could stem the scourge of school-age children and their parents: the bacterial infection that causes strep throat.

"There's a profound amount of disease that's generated in primary schoolchildren as they congregate," Grant Pickering, the vaccine maker's CEO, said at an investment conference in June. Less than two months later, Vaxcyte announced that it would hold off starting human trials for its strep vaccine, citing a need to conserve cash for its most advanced vaccine and a "dynamic macro environment."

The macro environment of American vaccine policy is being radically reshaped by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — an abrupt shift that is casting a pall on the business of developing vaccines.

Kennedy, who was a prominent anti-vaccine activist before becoming the nation's top health official, is using his powerful post to raise doubts about vaccines from coronavirus to measles, while rolling back government research funding. That is creating an environment in which some promising discoveries are being shelved because of concerns about lack of investment and difficulty winning regulatory approvals — particularly for mRNA-based vaccines — according to interviews with a dozen scientists, investors and executives, and a review of company financial disclosures.

Jonathan Kagan, co-founder
SEE VACCINES ON A5

Rubio visits Israel after rift over Qatar strike



NATHAN HOWARD/AP

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visit the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday. The visit, which was long planned, came after Israel's strike in Doha targeting Hamas angered the Trump administration. Israel also intensified attacks on northern Gaza over the weekend.

Guard surges vex big-city Democratic mayors

BY PATRICK SVITEK
AND MARIANA ALFARO

For nearly three weeks, President Donald Trump signaled Chicago would be the next site of a National Guard deployment, promising that armed federal troops would be "going in" to fight crime.

On Friday morning, he announced a different destination: Memphis.

Trump has left Democratic mayors uncertain where he will send forces next, making it a challenge to prepare for interventions that will affect residents'

As Trump considers sending federal troops to cities, officials strategize

daily lives and their cities' operations and could influence their own political careers.

As they prepare, Democratic mayors are communicating on text chains and strategy calls, contacting their governors — including those in Trump's party — and confronting tricky neighborhood politics, while grasping for

effective responses amid their own internal divisions.

Trump's tough talk on the ravages of violent crime has put them into a tight political box: They must show they are taking crime seriously while heeding pressure from core supporters to resist Trump.

Most have sought to convey a nuanced message: Crime is a serious issue, they say, and they are open to federal support, but they do not want Trump sending the military to their streets, especially without coordination.

"I'll work with anybody to keep my city safe," said Justin Bibb, the

mayor of Cleveland and chair of the Democratic Mayors Association. "I'll do it with this administration, but I don't want the damn National Guard in Cleveland patrolling my streets."

Trump unveiled his plans for Memphis on Friday, but he had spent recent days floating several other cities beyond Chicago, including Baltimore, New Orleans and New York City. A seemingly offhand comment about Portland, Ore., this month prompted a swift response from state and local officials asking him to stay away.

SEE MAYORS ON A2

Putin emboldened after Alaska, China summits

Russian leader has made escalating moves against Europe and Ukraine

BY ROBYN DIXON
AND CATHERINE BELTON

Since President Vladimir Putin's invitation to Alaska by President Donald Trump, the Russian leader has ramped up attacks on Ukraine, threatened to kill any future foreign forces in Ukraine, hit Western targets in Ukraine and unleashed a drone incursion into Poland.

The warm embrace from fellow rivals of the United States that Putin also received in China this month and the lack of a firm U.S. response has emboldened the Russian president as he accelerates efforts to overwhelm Ukraine and divide the once strong U.S.-European alliance, say analysts and former European and American officials.

In the latest sign of transatlantic discord, Trump downplayed the gravity of Russia's drone incursion in Poland, saying Thursday it could have been a mistake, even as European leaders called it an intentional probe of NATO's defenses and unity. Then on Saturday, Trump said he

would only impose tougher sanctions on Russia after all NATO countries halted their purchases of Russian oil.

"Putin is betting on European weakness, American disinterest and just continuously pushing for his goals, which go beyond Ukraine clearly," said Gabrielius Landsbergis, the former Lithuanian foreign minister. "The aggressive actions against Poland clearly show that his intentions reach further, and the only question is where would he draw the line."

Putin's success in persuading Trump in Alaska to drop pressure for a ceasefire, and the warm support that he received in China this month, provided him an important diplomatic boost as he escalates attacks.

"Putin has acted like he has a free hand since the Alaska summit," former Trump national security adviser John Bolton said in a post on X. "He's ignored any further conversation on a ceasefire, the Russian military is expanding its operations, and he's received the political support of his friends Xi Jinping, Narendra Modi, and Kim Jong Un," referring to the leaders of China, India and North Korea.

Putin's renewed harshness is rippling through Russia's political ecosystem as officials, propa-

SEE RUSSIA ON A11



NIRANJAN SHRESTHA/AP

Nepal's protesters face uncertain future

Youth movement brought down government — but it needs a plan

BY PRAVEEN KUMAR YADAV, KARISHMA MEHROTRA AND SUPRIYA KUMAR

KATHMANDU, NEPAL — A week before massive protests forced the resignation of Nepal's prime minister, Tanuja Pande was hunched over her phone in Kathmandu, furiously typing in the comments section of a TikTok video.

The clip showed Nepal's political elites flaunting their wealth — "flexing," as she put it — contrasted with images of ordinary Nepalis departing for the Persian Gulf, where most eke

out a meager living as manual laborers.

For Pande, a 24-year-old lawyer, the video hit close to home. In her hometown of Damak, in eastern Nepal, most people in her parents' generation went abroad to work. Back at home, she said, there aren't enough schools and hospitals are underfunded.

Her thoughts returned to the video on

SEE NEPAL ON A10

Nepali protesters celebrate on top of a government building in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

Motive in Kirk killing unclear

GOVERNOR ALLEGES 'LEFTIST IDEOLOGY'

Officials continue investigation in Utah

BY JEREMY ROEBUCK,
ANNABELLE TIMSIT AND
PRAVEENA SOMASUNDARAM

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox (R) said Sunday that authorities still do not know the motive in the deadly shooting of conservative activist Charlie Kirk but that interviews with those close to suspect Tyler Robinson have revealed new information, including that he has a "leftist ideology."

Robinson, who was arrested after a 33-hour manhunt, has not confessed to authorities or cooperated with the investigation since he was taken into custody Thursday, the governor said in appearances on multiple TV networks.

Relatives told investigators that Robinson, 22, had "very different" political views than those of his conservative family, Cox said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"There clearly was a leftist ideology," he said, without providing further details. State voter records show Robinson is registered as an unaffiliated voter, and his parents are registered Republicans.

Cox said the suspect, who was once a straight-A student, appeared to have been "radicalized" after dropping out of Utah State University. Bullet casings recovered at the scene of the shooting were engraved with messages

SEE KIRK ON A7

UVU students look to each other after the unthinkable

They yearn for civility amid a tense, polarized national climate

BY REIS THEBAULT

OREM, UTAH — The four friends settled around a picnic table on the packed patio of their favorite ice cream shop. It was Friday night in a college town. But the students couldn't relax.

Just two days earlier, they were fleeing campus, caught up in a tide of thousands of panicked classmates, all sent scattering by the gunshot that killed conservative activist Charlie Kirk during an event at Utah Valley University.

"Are you okay, and where were you?" Caleb Stay, a senior, asked the three others, once they had their scoops in hand. It was the way all their conversations had begun lately.

With classes canceled and the campus closed, the students struggled to process the horror that had turned their low-key commuter college into a crime scene, thrusting it — and them — into the international spotlight at a deeply polarized time. Gruesome video footage of the attack was inescapable, and its bloody backdrop was *their* courtyard. The shooter's perch, *their* student

SEE CAMPUS ON A8

IN THE NEWS

A turbulent meeting? Pressure from the White House for aggressive interest-rate cuts may pervade this week's meeting of the Federal Reserve board. **A3**

Plantation mysteries The descendants of an enslaved family and their enslavers explore the secrets of a Southern Maryland cabin. **B9**

THE NATION **The case** against Memphis police officers accused of beating Tyre Nichols may unravel. **A3** **An irrigation** district in Washington state is asking the White House to help fix its canal. **A4**

THE WORLD **King Charles III** lives a slower, more pastoral life on his vacation estate in Romania. **A9** **A rally of** the far right drew more than 100,000 people in London, police said. **A10**

THE ECONOMY **Elon Musk** is turning his attention to building a mobile network through his company, Starlink. **A12** **First responders** across the country are getting training on how to respond to incidents involving self-driving taxis. **A12**

STYLE **As film festival** season continues, the Academy Award race is slowly beginning to take shape. **B1**

SPORTS **Older and grayer**, Pete Carroll and Jim Harbaugh renew a coaching rivalry that's as hot as ever, Jerry Brewer writes. **C1**

METRO **The U.S. House** is preparing to vote on bills that would reshape criminal justice in the District. **C9**

HEALTH & SCIENCE **A new study** suggests that regular physical activity can help fight cancer on a cellular level. **D1**

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