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DJIA 45565.23 ▲ 147.16 0.32% NASDAQ 21590.14 ▲ 0.2% STOXX 600 554.76 ▲ 0.1% 10-YR. TREAS. ▲ 4/32, yield 4.238% OIL \$64.15 ▲ \$0.90 GOLD \$3,404.60 ▲ \$16.00 EURO \$1.1639 YEN 147.40

What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **Nvidia set fresh sales records** as the world's most valuable publicly traded company continued to capitalize on strong demand for AI computing power and shrugged off uncertainty surrounding its business in China. **A1**

◆ **Major U.S. stock indexes** rose in anticipation of Nvidia's numbers, with the S&P 500 rising 0.2% to a record and the Dow industrials and Nasdaq gaining 0.3% and 0.2%, respectively. **B11**

◆ **Amazon.com plans to** extend new employment offers to Whole Foods' U.S. corporate employees, aiming to bring the e-commerce giant's grocery teams closer together and ease collaboration. **B1**

◆ **OpenAI is updating** ChatGPT to better support users in mental distress after reports of troubling behavior and self harm associated with the heavy use of chatbots. **A10**

◆ **Prosecutors in Taiwan** indicted three people accused of stealing information from TSMC to help one of the company's premier suppliers win more orders. **B1**

◆ **HP's third-quarter sales** got a boost from growing demand for its AI-enabled personal computers, a trend its chief executive expects to continue next year. **B3**

◆ **Lego posted record sales** for the first half of the year as shoppers splurged on themes such as Lego City, Lego Technic, Lego Botanicals and Lego Star Wars. **B3**

◆ **J.M. Smucker, owner of** Folgers and Café Bustelo, said it would continue to increase coffee prices to help offset rising costs from tariffs, though it expects sales volume to slip. **B7**

World-Wide

◆ **Two children were killed** and 17 other people were injured when a shooter opened fire during Mass at a church adjoining a Catholic school in Minneapolis. **A3**

◆ **The White House said** it fired CDC Director Susan Monarez, and several top CDC officials resigned, throwing the agency's leadership into turmoil. **A3**

◆ **Denmark summoned** the top U.S. envoy to Copenhagen over an alleged covert influence campaign in Greenland aimed at alienating Denmark from the autonomous territory Trump has sought to control. **A7**

◆ **Indian industry and** agriculture began laboring under U.S. tariffs of 50% that include duties meant to punish New Delhi for its oil trade with Russia. **A16**

◆ **A Beijing-linked** yearslong espionage campaign reached around the globe to a far greater extent than investigators initially understood, the FBI revealed. **A3**

◆ **Trump fired** Robert Primus, a board member of the railroad regulator weighing the proposed merger of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern. **A2**

◆ **The Trump administration** took control of the management of Union Station in Washington, D.C., saying the rail hub had fallen into disrepair. **A4**

◆ **Kilmar Abrego Garcia**, whose case has come to encapsulate much of Trump's immigration agenda, will seek asylum in the U.S., his lawyers said. **A6**

◆ **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** formally inaugurated Turkey's integrated air-defense system known as the "Steel Dome." **A16**

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Catholic School Students Gunned Down in Church



RICHARD TSONGTAN/STAR TRIBUNE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRAUMA: A mother hugs her son after a shooter opened fire Wednesday at a church in Minneapolis, where students from Annunciation Catholic School were attending Mass. Two children were killed, and 14 children and three adults were injured. A3

In Trump's Second Presidency, An Unfettered Leader Takes Hold

By JOSH DAWSEY AND ANNIE LINSKEY

Some aides to President Trump warned him that building a ballroom at the White House would force part of the East Wing to be torn down and disrupt daily operations and tours, according to people familiar with the discussions.

Trump said he would build it anyway, and the contract was given to builders chosen by the White House.

In his first term, administration officials regularly curbed Trump's impulses, including on tariffs, immigration

and controlling the Federal Reserve.

In his second, Trump has been surrounded by fewer people who try to dissuade him, according to White House officials, Trump allies and observers of the presidency.

"I think he's learned there is not much that can really stop him from what he wants," said Marc Short, who was Trump's director of legislative affairs in his first term.

In recent days, Trump renewed a call to end mail-in voting, announced a new policy of coercing local governments into abandoning cash-

less-bail policies, and threatened to send the military to Baltimore and said he'd like to send them to New York and Chicago as well, all of which pushes the bounds of his authority.

In one of the most aggressive steps yet in that direction, he tried to remove Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook from her post on Monday, setting up a conflict with the Supreme Court, which has recently suggested that the central bank is protected from direct political manipulation. Some of his new directives are encouraged by advisers, while

others appear to come from Trump himself.

Seven months into his second term, Trump, a Republican, has also taken to riffing more frequently about authoritarianism, after positing during the campaign he would be a dictator only on "Day 1" of his presidency. The comment drew outrage from Democrats, who built their losing campaign around Trump as a threat to democracy.

On Monday, Trump praised

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◆ **Greg Ip: Markets shrug as Fed's autonomy slips..... A2**

Tech Staff Stage Revolt Over Gaza

By KATHERINE BLUNT AND SEBASTIAN HERRERA

When a group of employees raised a Palestinian flag outside Microsoft's headquarters and occupied a top executive's office, it marked an escalation of unrest brewing inside Silicon Valley's biggest companies over their work with the Israeli military.

While tech giants have long given employees latitude to engage in political speech at work, the latest wave of activism over the war in Gaza has put some workers at odds with their employers. On Wednesday, Microsoft said it had fired two employees who were part of the group that stormed its offices this week. Last year, Google fired dozens of workers after they staged similar sit-ins.

For months, employee discourse about Gaza has tested workplace policies at Microsoft and Google. Content moderators of internal message boards have repeatedly deleted comments about the conflict, according to current and former employees and internal correspondence reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Microsoft's moderators have deleted questions and conversation threads related to the war in Gaza and the company's work with Israel, screenshots reviewed by the Journal show. On a Microsoft-wide message board, one employee wrote about the impact of food shortages and attacks

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INSIDE



JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. NEWS
FDA approves new covid boosters—but restricts who can receive them. **A3**

BUSINESS & FINANCE
After Cracker Barrel uproar, activist investor steps up pressure on chain. **B1**

Mexico's Narcoterrorists Are Coming for Ecuador

A turf war between two cartels shakes up regional security

By RYAN DUBÉ

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador—Inside a gang's safe house in this port city, police officers found a shrine to *Santa Muerte*, or Saint Death, the skeletal icon of Mexican drug cartels.

The 5-foot statue was flanked by a smaller likeness of Jesús Malverde, a mustachioed 20th-century bandit revered by Mexican drug smugglers. Ecuadorean hit men lighted candles and prayed to the statues for protection before heading out to kill their next victim, said Roberto Santamaria, a police officer who helped discover the shrine in January. They had fully adopted the practices of their foreign cartel patrons.

"Everything that works for them in Mexico, they've brought here," said Santamaria.

Mexico's Jalisco New Generation and Sinaloa cartels have spread to more than 40 countries as they work to meet surging demand for cocaine in the U.S., Europe and Australia. Their turf war expanded into Ecuador, which became a top prize due to its strategic location nestled between the two biggest cocaine producers, Colombia and Peru.

The cartels work through local gangs that have grown stronger and more dangerous as they adopt the gruesome tactics of Mexico's drug wars. Ecuador has devolved in a few years from one of the region's safest nations to among the world's most deadly. Five of the world's 12 most murderous cities are in Ecuador, with the city of Durán ranked No. 1, according to the Igarapé Institute, a Brazil-

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AI Workers in Their 20s Rake In High Salaries

By KATHERINE BINDLEY

It's a tough time to be a young person looking for a job—unless you're in artificial intelligence.

The job market for entry-level workers is in a continued slump. The unemployment rate for new college graduates was 4.8% in June, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, compared with 4% for all workers.

While AI is part of the reason for the doldrums, there is a bright spot when it comes to workers with actual experience in machine learning. They're in their early 20s, they have AI know-how, and a bunch of them are making \$1

million a year.

Base salaries for nonmanagerial workers in AI with zero to three years experience grew by around 12% from 2024 to 2025, the largest gain of any experience group, according to a new report by the AI staffing firm Burtch Works, which analyzed the compensation of thousands of AI and data-science candidates. The report also found that people with AI experience are being promoted to management roles roughly twice as fast as their counterparts in other technology fields. They're jumping the ladder as a result of their skills and impact instead of their years on the job.

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