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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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DJIA 38460.92 ▼ 42.77 0.11% NASDAQ 15712.75 ▲ 0.1% STOXX 600 505.61 ▼ 0.4% 10-YR. TREAS. ▼ 13/32, yield 4.652% OIL \$82.81 ▼ \$0.55 GOLD \$2,324.50 ▼ \$3.20 EURO \$1.0701 YEN 155.35

What's News

Business & Finance

- ◆ **BHP has offered to buy Anglo American**, a long-time rival with a market capitalization of about \$35 billion, in a potential megadeal that could reshape the global mining industry. **A1**
- ◆ **Top business groups** and a national tax-services firm filed lawsuits challenging a new FTC ban on noncompete agreements, cases that will test the agency's power to broadly prohibit practices it says are anticompetitive. **A1**
- ◆ **Meta Platforms** reported record first-quarter revenue as the company's advertising business grew at a rapid clip even as investors soured on forecasts of rising costs related to artificial intelligence. **B1**
- ◆ **U.S. stocks ended mixed**, with the S&P 500 eking out a gain of less than 0.1% and the Nasdaq rising 0.1%. The Dow declined 0.1%. **B11**
- ◆ **Amazon said it would** let companies use their own generative artificial-intelligence models inside its AI app development platform. **B1**
- ◆ **Blackstone struck a deal** to acquire restaurant franchiser Tropical Smoothie Cafe from Levine Leichtman Capital for nearly \$2 billion, including debt. **B3**
- ◆ **Prada reported an increase** in revenue for the first three months of the year, despite what the luxury brand called a challenging market environment. **B3**

World-Wide

- ◆ **The Justice Department** is conducting a criminal investigation into McKinsey related to its past role in advising some of the largest U.S. opioid manufacturers on how to boost sales. **A1, A6**
- ◆ **Rudy Giuliani** and Mark Meadows were indicted, along with 16 others, in Arizona for their alleged efforts to overturn Trump's November 2020 election defeat in the state. **A3**
- ◆ **Ukraine used** longer-range ATACMS missiles secretly provided by the U.S. against Russian forces east of Berdyansk shortly before Biden signed a law that includes money for more of those weapons. **A7**
- ◆ **The U.S. fertility rate** fell to 1.62 births per woman in 2023, a 2% decline from a year earlier and the lowest rate since the government began tracking it in the 1930s. **A1**
- ◆ **The Supreme Court** struggled with the consequences of its 2022 decision ending the nationwide right to abortion in a case pitting the health of women suffering medical emergencies against an Idaho law that bans the procedure. **A4**
- ◆ **Arizona's State House** voted to repeal a near-total abortion ban that has become a hot button political issue in the state and the nation. **A4**
- ◆ **Pro-Palestinian protests** took root on university campuses across the country, as tensions at Columbia remained high. **A3**

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King's Horses Take Free Rein Through London



HOOFING IT: Several of the king's horses dashed through the streets of London Wednesday after members of the Household Cavalry lost their mounts during preparations for the king's birthday parade. For video of the horses, scan the code on A16.

McKinsey Hit With Criminal Inquiry

DOJ is investigating consultant's advice to opioid makers on how to boost sales

By Alexander Gladstone

The Justice Department is conducting a criminal investigation into consulting firm McKinsey related to its past role in advising some of the nation's largest opioid manufacturers on how to boost sales.

Federal prosecutors are also looking into whether McKinsey or any of its employees might have obstructed justice in relation to records of its consulting services for opioid producers, according to people familiar with the investigation, which has been continuing for several years.

A grand jury has been empaneled in Virginia as part of the federal inquiry into McKinsey's opioid-related consulting, some of the people said. The U.S. attorney's offices in the Western District of Virginia and the District of Massachusetts are jointly conducting the investigation, the people said.

McKinsey declined to comment. The criminal probe centers on consulting advice McKinsey gave to drugmaker clients including Purdue, Endo International and Mallinckrodt that previously sparked mass civil litigation against the company. Government and private plaintiffs filed hundreds of

civil lawsuits in recent years accusing the consulting firm of exacerbating opioid addiction, an allegation that McKinsey has denied.

In 2021, McKinsey reached a settlement with all 50 states, five U.S. territories, and Washington, D.C., to pay \$642 million to resolve civil opioid-related litigation against the company, without

◆ Opioid settlement falls short for many..... A6

FTC Faces Lawsuits On Ban Restricting Ex-Staffers

By Dave Michaels and Russell Adams

WASHINGTON—Top business groups and a national tax-services firm filed lawsuits Wednesday challenging a new Federal Trade Commission ban on noncompete agreements, cases that will test the agency's power to broadly prohibit practices it says are anticompetitive.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce challenged the regulation in federal court in East Texas while the tax firm Ryan LLC filed its lawsuit in federal court in Dallas. Other business groups joined the Chamber's suit—including the Business Roundtable, which represents chief executive officers of some of the country's biggest employers.

The rule, issued by the FTC on Tuesday, prohibits companies from enforcing existing noncompete agreements on anyone other than senior executives. The FTC says 1 in 5 Americans is subject to non-compete agreements.

"It's one of the most outrageous examples of government overreach that I have seen," Brint Ryan, chief executive of Ryan LLC, said in an interview. "It's such an aggressive position."

An FTC spokesman de- Please turn to page A2

PERSONAL JOURNAL



Not a sneaker, not a loafer. The snoafer is a new entrant in the dad-shoe trend. **A10**

BUSINESS & FINANCE



Boeing burned through nearly \$4 billion in the most recent quarter and reported a loss. **B1**

Bone of Contention: Could Courthouse Dogs Sway the Jury?

More pooches work in the justice system, bringing hugs, wags and some controversy

By Corinne Ramey

In California's Ventura County, there's a well-dressed regular at the local courthouse who is always lying down on the job.

Comet, a 3-year-old black lab, wears a vest and bow tie to court and settles into the witness box before a trial starts. Jurors, who could be biased by the dog's presence, are none the wiser. Unless Comet, snuggled at the testifying witness's feet,

nods off. "The dog snores and it can get really stressful for us," says Jennifer Barbettini, who works with crime victims at the Ventura County district attorney's office. The witness typically nudges Comet awake before anyone notices. The pack is growing. More than 320 courthouse dogs are working across the U.S., more than triple that of a decade ago, according to Ellen Please turn to page A8

Fertility Rate Falls To a Record Low Amid Social Shifts

By Jennifer Calfas and Anthony DeBarros

U.S. women are giving birth at record-low rates.

The total fertility rate fell to 1.62 births per woman in 2023, a 2% decline from a year earlier, federal data released Thursday showed. It is the lowest rate recorded since the government began tracking it in the 1930s.

The decline reflects a continuing trend as U.S. women

navigate economic and social challenges that have prompted some to forgo or delay having children. A confluence of factors are at play. Women in the U.S. are having fewer children, later in life. Women are establishing fulfilling careers and have more access to contraception.

At the same time, young people are also more uncertain about their futures and spending more of their income

China Property Bust Was Plain to Foresee

Developers, home buyers and Western bankers all ignored warning signs

By Rebecca Feng

When New York hedge-fund manager Parker Quillen visited a glitzy new development in northern China called Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan, he wondered how on earth the developer would fill all that space.

It had apartments starting at \$1 million and plans for an office tower bigger than the Empire State Building, an opera hall, shopping malls and

hotels. Its total square footage was to exceed the land area of Monaco.

Was there a plan for attracting buyers? Quillen asked. Polo, said the marketing agent showing him around.

"Polo? You mean the horse thing?" he asked. "Exactly," he recalled her saying.

The agent, dressed in riding gear, led him through a Please turn to page A8

