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# WSJ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND


DOW JONES | News Corp ********* SATURDAY/SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22 - 23, 2025 ~ VOL. CCLXXXV NO. 43 WSJ.com ★★★★ $6.00

## What's News

### Business & Finance

◆ **Berkshire Hathaway** is holding a record amount of cash and Treasury bills, raising questions about what Buffett plans to do with the more than $300 billion. **A1**

◆ **The SEC has agreed** to drop a lawsuit against Coinbase that sought to regulate the company as a stock exchange, marking the end of years of hard-line enforcement against the crypto market. **A1**

◆ **The tariffs targeting** aluminum imports into the U.S. have buyers scrambling to procure the metal before the levies are expected to kick in. **B9**

◆ **Stocks erased** much of their gains from the week Friday after investors tapped the brakes in response to signs of a lackluster economy. The Dow and S&P each fell 1.7% while the Nasdaq declined 2.2% in the session. **B11**

◆ **The U.S. FDA declared** that the shortage of Novo Nordisk's weight-loss medications Wegovy and Ozempic has been resolved. **B9**

◆ **U.S. real-estate advertiser** and analytics provider CoStar made a $1.68 billion offer for Australia's second-largest property advertiser. **B9**

◆ **French content producer** Banijay is seeking to expand its footprint in English-speaking markets, including the U.S., to drive growth. **B10**

### World-Wide

◆ **The Justice Department** has launched an investigation into UnitedHealth Group's Medicare billing practices in recent months, people familiar with the matter said. **A1**

◆ **The Trump administration** fired the military's highest-ranking officer, the admiral leading the Navy, and several other senior leaders in a massive Pentagon shake-up. **A4**

◆ **The U.S. and Ukraine** are nearing a deal that would hand valuable mineral rights to the U.S., an agreement that the Trump administration has sought as compensation for military aid to fight off Russia's invasion. **A9**

◆ **Los Angeles Mayor** Karen Bass said she dismissed the city's fire chief following her management of the devastating Pacific Palisades wildfire last month. **A3**

◆ **A judge allowed** the Trump administration to resume its dismantling of USAID, saying employees weren't facing harms so severe as to justify a halt. **A4**

◆ **A federal judge** held off ruling on the Justice Department's request to drop the bribery case against New York Mayor Adams. **A5**

◆ **Israel warned Hamas** it would face consequences if it doesn't hand over the body of a mother who was kidnapped with her young sons. **A8**

**NOONAN**
A stiff drink from the Trump fire hose **A13**

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# Boys of Summer Shake off the Winter Rust

CHRIS CODUTO/GETTY IMAGES

**NO SCORE:** Chicago Cubs catcher Miguel Amaya tags out Austin Barnes of the Los Angeles Dodgers at home plate during the second inning of a spring training game Friday in Arizona. Major League teams are playing their first preseason games.

# Buffett Is Hoarding Lots of Cash, Raising Eyebrows on Wall Street

By Karen Langley

Warren Buffett is known for picking stocks. These days, he is increasingly picking cash.

The mountain of cash and Treasury bills at the famed investor's company, Berkshire Hathaway, rose above $300 billion in the third quarter—easily a record and its highest as a percentage of company assets in data going back to 1998, according to Dow Jones Market Data.

Holding lots of cash is standard practice for Berkshire, but the scale of the recent buildup has raised eyebrows among some observers of the Omaha, Neb., conglomerate.

They are preparing to parse Buffett's annual letter to shareholders on Saturday for clues about how the Berkshire chairman and chief executive is thinking about the stock market and any opportunities he might see for investing the cash. Berkshire's annual report, which includes the letter, will show how much cash the company held at the end of 2024.

"The issue is, what are they going to do with all this cash?" said Steven Check, chief investment officer of Check Capital Management, who has attended Berkshire's annual meetings since 1996. "This is as extreme as I can recall."

Berkshire generates cash from its stable of operating businesses, which range from insurance to rail, from utilities to candy, as well as from its investments. Recently, the

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# DOJ Probes Insurer's Billing Practices

New civil fraud investigation looks at UnitedHealth's Medicare plans

By Christopher Weaver And Anna Wilde Mathews

The Justice Department has launched an investigation into UnitedHealth Group's Medicare billing practices in recent months, people familiar with the matter said.

The new civil fraud investigation is examining the company's practices for recording diagnoses that trigger extra payments to its Medicare Advantage plans, including at physician groups the insurance giant owns.

A series of articles in The Wall Street Journal last year showed that Medicare paid UnitedHealth billions of dollars for questionable diagnoses. Attorneys with the Justice Department as recently as Jan. 31 interviewed medical providers named in the articles.

In the Medicare Advantage system, insurers get lump-sum payments from the federal government to oversee enrollees' Medicare benefits. When patients have certain diagnoses, the payments go up, creating an incentive to diagnose more diseases.

UnitedHealth's shares fell 7.2% Friday, wiping out more than $30 billion in market

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◆ **Heard on the Street: It's not business as usual... B12**

# SEC Plan To Drop Coinbase Suit Marks Big Shift

By Dave Michaels And Vicky Ge Huang

Regulators have agreed to drop a lawsuit against Coinbase that sought to regulate the company as a stock exchange, marking the end of years of hard-line enforcement against the crypto market.

Coinbase said Friday that enforcers at the Securities and Exchange Commission would recommend dismissal of the two-year-old lawsuit, a crucial plank of the agency's strategy to bring crypto under investor-protection rules. Coinbase had fought the suit, which was filed during the Biden administration, arguing the law didn't support equating crypto assets with securities.

"It's a great day for Coinbase and for crypto," said Paul Grewal, Coinbase's chief legal officer. "We were committed to defending it [the lawsuit] to the gates of hell, for as long as it took and for as much money as it took."

Dismissing the Coinbase lawsuit still requires a commission vote. The company expects the vote to happen next week, Grewal said.

The SEC's retreat was expected after the election of President Trump, a Republican who embraced crypto and promised to end the industry's friction with the commission.

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# Top Pentagon Officers Fired

MANDEL NGAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

The Trump administration fired Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. CQ Brown Jr. and several other senior leaders. **A4**

# After 150 Years of Friendship, Canada, U.S. Come to Blows

Tariff threats and talk of a 51st state have destabilized one of the world's most powerful partnerships; 'Governor' Trudeau

By Vipal Monga and Jeanne Whalen

Canadian officials used to think President Trump was joking during his first term when he mused in private meetings with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about annexing Canada. All it took was a wild hockey showdown between the two countries to show that Canada is taking the threat very seriously.

Turning Canada into "the 51st" state has been one of Trump's most persistent, if seemingly far-fetched, talking points at the start of his second term as president. He publicly proposes removing what he calls the "artificial line" between the two countries.

He's threatened to use "economic force," including tariffs, to compel Canada to join the United States. He told Trudeau in a call earlier this month that he could erase the border by ripping up a 1908 treaty between Great Britain and the U.S. that helped set the 49th parallel as the boundary, according to people familiar with the call. He has started to refer to Trudeau as "governor."

Canadian leaders are not amused. Trudeau convened an emergency economic summit with business and labor leaders, en-

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◆ **Jason Gay: Canada gets revenge............ A14**

# Soap Opera Fans Get a Win After Decades of Scorn

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First new daytime soap in 25 years raises devotees' hopes for the ailing genre

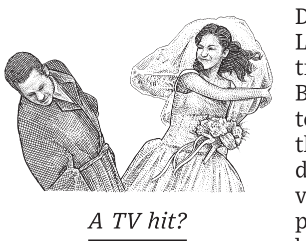
By Tara Weiss

Devin Garcia was stuck at home with the flu when he discovered "Days Of Our Lives." He made an immediate connection with Bo and Hope, two of the show's main characters, and by the time he returned to high school, Garcia was hooked.

He bought a VCR so he could tape the show while he was in class. That first week he called his mom from a pay phone to confirm the recording light was on.

Garcia hasn't missed an episode in more than 40 years.

While the rest of the world moved on to Tony Soprano, Don Draper and Logan Roy, he tracked the Brady and Horton families as they married, divorced, survived kidnappings and came back from the dead—all without a hair out of place. "I consider them like



*A TV hit?*

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# Johnson Navigates Tough House Terrain

By Molly Ball And Olivia Beavers

It was a few days before the Super Bowl, and House Speaker Mike Johnson was, as usual, desperate to prove he wasn't letting Donald Trump down.

President Trump, he said, kept pressing him to hitch a ride on Air Force One to the big game in Johnson's home state. "He asked me for the third time last night," the 53-year-old Louisianian said with a half-rueful smile, perched on an ivory brocade settee in his ornate office in the Capitol. But, as he kept telling the president, New Orleans is a five-hour drive from Johnson's hometown of Shreveport, where he would need to pick up his family before heading to the game. So he had to decline the D.C.-to-New Orleans trip, which Johnson repeatedly assured Trump wasn't indicative of any lack of enthusiasm. "I won't be on the plane. But we have a very close relationship," Johnson said.

In the year-and-a-half since the amiable Johnson stumbled into the most powerful job in Congress, he has cemented his position atop the contentious leadership ladder. But he might not have remained in his post without a last-minute

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◆ **Republicans take heat at town halls............................ A6**