



BING GUAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

An Eager Electorate Inside and Out

A long line of voters waited to enter the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan on Sunday as turnout in New York City for the first weekend of early voting in the state set records. Early voting ends on Nov. 3. Election coverage on Pages A15-19.

Before a Vote,
Panic Buttons
And Boulders

By DAN BARRY
WILKES-BARRE, Pa. — With northeastern Pennsylvania awash again in the reds and oranges of a dazzling autumn, workers recently planted boulders around a government building in downtown Wilkes-Barre to address a seasonal ugliness. But this was no beautification project. Luzerne County is bracing for Election Day. Across the country, the doubts and anger ginned up by the spurious election-fraud claims of former President Donald J. Trump have unsettled the once-routine civic task of collecting and counting votes. With the specter of political violence looming, the Department of Homeland Security has advised hundreds of concerned communities on election safety.

At the center of this maelstrom of distrust is Luzerne County, which, for some, has become Exhibit A for election conspiracy theories. Unnerved by local chatter, county officials have implemented several extraordinary security measures — including a primitive fortification of large rocks around the county building in Wilkes-Barre where the Bureau of Elections is located.

The boulder installation in this swing-state city of 45,000 could serve as a metaphor for the United States of 2024, in which planning for the sacred exercise of democracy might include preparing for a car bomb.

“We’re a microcosm,” said the county manager, Romilda Crocamo, the recipient of repeated threats. The most recent one, serious enough that she alerted law enforcement, was delivered by text to a close relative who is very private and not involved in politics.

“Somebody had to go through a lot of effort to make that connection,” Ms. Crocamo said.

Emily Cook, the director of the county’s Bureau of Elections, has also been threatened, both on social media and in person. “People say that I deserved to be executed,” she said.

Luzerne County has endured a lot over the years. The coal-mining prosperity it once enjoyed, reflected in everything from the majestic courthouse to the distinctive Market Street Bridge, is long gone. And those who were around

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Muslim Mayor Backs Trump, and Roils His City

By KURT STREETER
HAMTRAMCK, Mich. — Amer Ghalib has made a lot of national news as the leader of a small, Midwestern city. His election in 2021 as mayor of Hamtramck, Mich., was itself a headline. Mr. Ghalib, who is from Yemen, became the first Arab American and first Muslim to govern the city. And he was working with what was believed to be the first all-Muslim City Council in the country.

Two years later, Mr. Ghalib created another stir when he and other socially conservative Muslims banned the L.G.B.T.Q. Pride flag from publicly owned flagpoles, alarming liberals who said the move was discriminatory and

Liberal Residents See
a Betrayal of Their
Welcoming Spirit

harmful to the city’s welcoming reputation.

Their fears only heightened last month, after Mr. Ghalib endorsed Donald J. Trump, who as president had ushered in what is known as the Muslim ban, blocking immigrants from seven majority-Muslim nations, including Mr. Ghalib’s home country. Adding to the tensions was a visit by Mr. Trump, who hoped the mayor’s support could peel off a meaningful number of Muslim voters in

Michigan, a swing state. Explaining his support, Mr. Ghalib pointed to a distaste for liberal social views, anger at President Biden’s support of Israel and a belief that Mr. Trump will end the conflict in the Middle East. In Hamtramck (pronounced “ham-tram-ick”), many longtime liberal residents, including members of the L.G.B.T.Q. community, say they were dejected.

Over the years, they had actively encouraged the city of 30,000 residents, just north of downtown Detroit, to welcome immigrants. When Muslims won a majority of seats in the six-member City Council in 2015, they cheered the change as a rebuke to the anti-immigrant rhetoric used

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AMIR HAMIA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Corn grown with altered bacteria appears more robust, right, and requires less chemical fertilizer.

Modifying DNA to Help Fight Climate Change

By ERIC LIPTON
HAZELWOOD, Mo. — With the push of a red button, a milky-colored liquid sprayed onto a load of corn seed at a warehouse in central Missouri. It was a hint of a revolution underway in American agriculture, driven by a desire to combat climate change while still feeding and fueling the world. Inside that liquid are bacteria whose DNA has been altered so that once the corn seeds are in the

BUYING TIME
Manipulating Nature, at a Risk

ground, the bacteria create extra nutrients for the plants. That could greatly reduce the need for the chemical fertilizers that dominate modern agriculture and are a source of the pollution that is heating the planet.

As the dangers of climate change become more apparent,

scientists and entrepreneurs are exploring ways to engineer natural systems to reduce greenhouse gases.

A \$200 billion industry dominated by a few global giants like Koch Industries, chemical fertilizer is made by mixing nitrogen from the air with hydrogen from natural gas at high temperatures and pressure to create ammonia. The ammonia is turned into ammonium nitrate, which is injected

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Trump Offering Promises
As He Woos Big Business

Candidate’s Stances Reverse as He Chases
Money He Denied Needing in 2016

This article is by Shane Goldmacher, Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan.

On a Friday in late September, Donald J. Trump took time off the campaign trail for a closed-door meeting at Mar-a-Lago with officials representing the vaping industry.

The vaping emissaries talked about loosening regulations and told the former president he had “saved” the industry in the past. The group — including Mr. Trump’s 2016 campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, and another 2016 campaign aide, Michael Rubino — showed him mock-ups of mailers they were sending out through Election Day. Mr. Trump asked for input on what he could say on social media about a complicated regulatory issue.

Within hours, Mr. Trump had posted about his allegiances to the embattled e-cigarette sector. “I saved Flavored Vaping in 2019,” Mr. Trump wrote on social media. “I’ll save Vaping again!”

The head of the Vapor Technology Association, Tony Abboud, who was also in the meeting, quickly declared he was “pleased” that Mr. Trump was “continuing to fight for vapers.” The vaping industry has not been a significant contributor in the presidential race, but the Vapor Technology Association has been quietly sending versions of those mailers to voters in battleground states warning that Democrats want “to steal vapes from freedom-loving Americans.”

As Mr. Trump seeks a return to the White House, he has come a

long way from his 2016 campaign pitch that he was so rich he was incorruptible. Back then, he mocked the G.O.P.’s donor-lobbyist class and boasted in his announcement speech, “I don’t need anybody’s money.” Today, Mr. Trump is looking everywhere for cash: asking small donors online, pressing fellow billionaires over private meals in Trump Tower and lobbying for donations from industries regulated by the government.

As he does so, he is sometimes making overt promises about what he will do once he’s in office, a level of explicitness toward individual industries and a handful of billionaires that has rarely been seen in modern presidential politics.

In some cases, Mr. Trump has sought to shake loose cash from industries like oil and energy that have long aligned with his deregulation agenda. In others, Mr. Trump has flipped his positions,

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SAUL MARTINEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Donald J. Trump is backing legal marijuana in Florida.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Strikes Could Corner Iran,
Hastening Nuclear Push

This article is by David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt, Ronen Bergman and Farnaz Fassihi.

WASHINGTON — When Israeli fighter jets roared off the runways on Friday night, on a thousand-mile run to Iran, they headed for two major sets of targets: the air defenses that protect Tehran, including Iran’s leadership, and the giant fuel mixers that make propellant for Iran’s missile fleet.

Israel’s military leaders, in calls with Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III and other senior American officials, had concluded that taking out the air defenses would make Iran’s leaders fearful that Tehran itself could not be defended. That

feeling of vulnerability was already high, after Israel decimated the leadership of Hamas and Hezbollah, Tehran’s proxy forces that could strike Israel, over the past month.

The surprise element for the Iranians was a set of strikes that hit a dozen or so fuel mixers, and took out the air defenses that protected several critical oil and petrochemical refineries, according to a senior U.S. official and two Israeli defense officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal planning.

Without the capability to mix fuel, Iran cannot produce more of the type of ballistic missiles that its forces fired on Israel on Oct. 1, the immediate provocation for

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In Ukraine’s Surprise Incursion,
Episodes of Brutality and Mercy

This article is by Anatoly Kurmanav, Haley Willis, Ekaterina Bodyagina, Oleg Matsnev and Dmitriy Khavin.

The drone flying over Korenevo village, in the Kursk region of Russia that Ukraine invaded in August, recorded a grisly scene: at least seven bodies lying on the road, most of them in civilian clothes.

Destroyed cars were scattered on the roadside, some with corpses in them. One man lay entangled with a red bicycle. Some bodies had decomposed so badly in the summer heat that they had to be identified by their teeth, according to a volunteer who helped recover the remains.

The video and photographs that captured the scene were taken in the early days of Ukraine’s offensive, the first invasion of Russian territory since World War II. The area was heavily contested by Russian and Ukrainian troops, with weapons fired in both directions, so it may be impossible to determine who was responsible for the deaths with available information.

But the Korenevo casualties represent the clearest known example of the toll on Russian civilians of Ukraine’s seizure of territory in Kursk. They also highlight the unexpected position Ukraine is in — an invading and occupying force for the first time in two and a

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SPORTS D1-8

A Flailing Captain at the Helm

Aaron Judge has become strikeout prone, and his Yankees are trailing, 2-0, in the World Series.

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The Tunes Before the Break

Meet those who may have made you chuckle at a song playing as an N.F.L. game went to a commercial.

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Water, but It’s Not Drinkable

People in the storm-hit Asheville, N.C., area can resume flushing and showering, but the tap water is discolored. Officials ask for patience.

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Land of Opportunity, and Risk

As Americans flock south and west, more people have been exposed to the hazards of climate change.

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INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Surviving Italy’s Volcanoes

Officials have plans to save a half-million people in Naples from fumes, quakes or a full eruption.

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Trailblazing
Skateboarder

Patti McGee, the first female champion of the sport, appeared on the cover of Life Magazine and with Johnny Carson. She was 79.

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Artist and Acerbic Voice

Gary Indiana made films, video art and photographs, but he was best known as a pioneering critic and mordant novelist. He was 74.

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BUSINESS B1-4

Left Behind in A.I. Chip Boom

Intel was long Silicon Valley’s dominant microprocessor company. But missed opportunities and poor execution left it on the sideline in tech’s latest gold rush as others cashed in.

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Bracing for New Economic Era

Policymakers who support open markets are increasingly lonely voices in a world where protectionism is on the rise. A second Trump term would probably accelerate the trend.

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Nicholas Kristof

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ARTS C1-6

Chopin Waltz Is Unearthed

A curator at the Morgan Library & Museum was shocked to discover a manuscript of what appeared to be an unknown work by the composer.

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