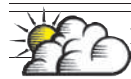


The Washington Post

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Partly sunny 66/54 • Tomorrow: Warmer 77/62 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2024 • **\$3**

ELECTION 2024

Officials try to safeguard vote count

Panic buttons, drones and snipers among plans to protect elections

BY HANNAH ALLAM, AMY GARDNER AND YVONNE WINGETT SANCHEZ

Eager to reassure nervous Americans that their votes will be protected, authorities are touting unprecedented security plans designed to withstand violence and other nightmare scenarios on Election Day and in a potentially uncertain aftermath.

Throughout the country, local officials are taking elaborate measures to fortify election-related sites, including plans for snipers on a rooftop to protect a key vote-counting headquarters, panic buttons for election workers and surveillance drones buzzing overhead.

Law enforcement agencies are keeping first responders on standby and flooding the streets with extra patrol officers. At least two states, Nevada and Washington, have activated the National Guard in case of unrest. Arizona's secretary of state, in charge of certifying statewide results, has said he wears a bulletproof vest in case of attack.

Political analysts and pro-democracy groups see two main takeaways from the extraordinary effort to defend the vote: The first is that Americans should have high confidence that casting a ballot is safe and that the system will hold because of extra guardrails added since the chaotic fallout of Donald Trump's attempts to overturn his defeat in 2020. The second is that it shouldn't have to be this way.

"There is clear and present danger but there's also, frankly, substantial vigilance and sub-

SEE SECURITY ON A4

Pennsylvania county: Officials fight election-rigging claims. **A9**

Contesting results: Trump has set the stage to cry foul if he loses. **A3**



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Former president Donald Trump at a campaign rally Sunday in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Vice President Kamala Harris visits the Greater Emmanuel Institutional Church of God in Christ in Detroit. Trump supporters wave flags in West Palm Beach, Florida. People wave as Harris's motorcade passes in Detroit.

In bathrooms, a discreet note: Vote Harris. No one will know.

BY EMILY DAVIES

One woman stuck a note to the door of her hair salon in North Carolina.

Another pressed it onto the back of a tampon box in Arkansas.

A third hung one on a mirror of a women's bathroom at an Ohio airport.

"Woman to woman," the note read. "No one sees your vote at the polls."

In swing states and Republican strongholds, on college campuses and in sports arenas, sticky notes have appeared reminding women that their votes are confidential — kept private even and especially from the men in their lives.

The origins of the trend are unclear, but the co-founder of Women for Harris-Walz, a grassroots group supporting the vice president's campaign, says her members have been sticking notes in bathrooms and similar spaces for months, encouraging women to vote their own minds and reminding them that their ballot is secret.

Now, in the final days of the presidential race, what started as a whisper campaign by women and for women has become the subject of a controversial 30-

SEE MESSAGES ON A11

Turnout: Candidates hope to turn gender gap to their advantage. **A5**



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST



SAUL MARTINEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Russia feigns indifference as it roots quietly for Trump

BY FRANCESCA EBEL AND CATHERINE BELTON

MOSCOW — It appeared to be Russia's strongest endorsement of a U.S. presidential candidate to date. Asked whether he had a preference for Donald Trump or Kamala Harris, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a sly smile.

"Our favorite," if you can call it that, was the current president, Mr. Biden," he told the audience at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September. "But he was removed from the race, and he recommended all his supporters to support Ms. Harris. Well, we will do so — we will support her," he added, his voice laced with

irony, as he complimented her "expressive and infectious laugh."

The Russian leader's tongue-in-cheek remarks were a light, geopolitical gibe designed to mask a sense in Moscow that Russia would have a lot more to gain from a second Trump presidency even as it publicly downplays the importance of Tuesday's U.S. election.

In a clear sign of its interest, the Kremlin and Russia's military intelligence service have directed multiple disinformation campaigns targeting Harris and her

SEE RUSSIA ON A13

Middle East: Palestinians, Israelis view election with resignation. **A13**

In final stretch, a stark contrast

CANDIDATES MAKE CLOSING ARGUMENTS

Harris preaches unity as Trump lashes out

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND ISAAC ARNSDORF

Vice President Kamala Harris used her campaign stops in Michigan on Sunday to reiterate her message that she would be a president for all Americans by inviting those who disagree with her to the table, while Republican nominee Donald Trump doubled down on portraying a dystopian future for the country that he claimed only he could fix.

Harris and Trump have offered starkly different closing messages as they each fight for a tiny sliver of undecided voters in seven battleground states — Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona and Nevada — that are expected to decide who will be the next president. Polls show the two candidates remained deadlocked across all seven states in one of the most closely contested presidential races in modern history.

Trump kicked off a Sunday campaign swing through Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia by lashing out against a prestigious Iowa poll showing Harris unexpectedly in the lead there and extensively discussing unsubstantiated allegations of election cheating. He sounded hoarse and fed up, at one point saying he would put up a chart but "I don't want to waste a lot of your time."

Trump said he regretted leaving office after losing the 2020 election and trying to overturn the result. "I shouldn't have left," he said. He also imagined the

SEE ELECTION ON A4

Policy: Trump aims to upend the system; Harris to work within it. **A7**

Musk: Inside his slash-and-burn plans to remake government. **A16**



SETH WENIG/AP

On target

Terry McLaurin hauls in a touchdown pass during the Commanders' 27-22 victory over the New York Giants on Sunday. At 7-2, Washington is off to its best start in 28 years. **Sports, D1**

Gazans say IDF used them as shields

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK, HAJAR HARB AND JOHN HUDSON

For two weeks in late July and early August, said Mohammed Saad, 20, he and two other Palestinian men were forced by an Israeli army unit in Gaza to enter buildings feared to contain explosives and photograph every inch before troops were given the all clear to enter.

When the soldiers were done with him, he said, someone shot

him in the back.

Saad was among four Palestinian men who spoke on the record to provide vivid accounts of what they described as Israel employing detained Palestinians as human shields in Gaza — defined by the Geneva Conventions as using civilians or other detainees to shield military operations from attack — in this case, by forcing them to carry out life-threatening tasks to reduce risk to Israeli soldiers.

Their nearly contemporaneous

accounts are detailed, corroborated by other witnesses, and consistent with testimony by an Israeli soldier who fought in Gaza, and with interviews collected by Breaking the Silence, an organization that works with troops who have served in the occupied Palestinian territories. They described a practice in which Palestinians are detained, interrogated and ultimately released, indicating the Israeli army did not believe them to be militants. They

SEE IDF ON A14

Protesters defend legacy of D.C. icon

BY ELLIE SILVERMAN AND PAUL DUGGAN

Outside a pizza restaurant at the heart of D.C.'s vibrant U Street corridor, a crowd of protesters gathered in late October, enraged, they said, by an appalling insult to a hero of theirs whose legacy they had showed up to defend.

They rallied, stomped and chanted outside the empty restaurant at 12th and U streets NW,

which had closed in advance of the widely advertised demonstration after a few days of escalating outrage over a menu item lampooning the cocaine addiction of Marion Barry, an icon of a vanished era in the capital city, a man who was called "mayor for life."

In today's gentrified Washington, D.C., a charter boarding campus, has been accused of flouting education laws that protect students with disabilities. **B1**

sions stick. What appeared to be a White-led business's attempt to profit off a Black leader's pain left many native Washingtonians more than furious; their anger seemed tinged with sadness, with a deepening sense of loss in a city transformed over a quarter-century of rapid change.

"It's like they're participating in cultural erasure," Ronald Motten, a protest organizer, said of

SEE PROTESTS ON A2

IN THE NEWS

'The Bachelor' in Ukraine The man has an easy smile and the women are beautifully dressed, but the nation's adaptation of the TV show still shows the scars of war. **A12**

House Speaker Mike Johnson could soon lead a conservative overhaul of the government — or find himself in the political wilderness. **A10**

THE NATION Over 74 million ballots had already been cast as of Saturday, marking a surge in early voting. **A3** **Her father** was among the first covid-19 deaths. She wants voters to remember. **A6**

Trump's closing days on the campaign trail have featured chaotic moments reminiscent of his presidency. **A10** **Harris is fighting** political headwinds on immigration in the final stage of the race. **A11**

THE REGION D.C. has become something of a national model for efforts to register people who are incarcerated to vote, following a law passed in 2020. **B1** **The District** is joining four states on Tuesday in considering whether to adopt a ranked-choice voting system. **B1**

Glenn Youngkin welcomed Trump to a rally in Salem, Virginia, that left no doubt about the governor's allegiance. **B1** **The SEED School** of Washington, D.C., a charter boarding campus, has been accused of flouting education laws that protect students with disabilities. **B1**

STYLE As the Trump campaign embraces Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s causes, influencer Alex Clark stands at a key political intersection. **C1** **TGI Fridays**, founded as the original "singles bar," could be headed for bankruptcy. How did the party end? **C1**

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