



T-storm 83/65 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny 77/59 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 2024 • \$3

Inflation is only part of the story in Pa. county

Repeated economic shocks have taken a toll on election bellwether

BY DAVID J. LYNCH

ERIE, PA. — Esther Kendema begins work at 4:30 a.m., cleaning buildings for a local university. After a full shift, she drives a few hours for Uber. Then the mother of 10 heads to her third job, cleaning a community center on the city's east side.

Kendema, 42, often gets only two or three hours of sleep before starting her daily routine all over again. She feels the pressure of a \$579 monthly car loan payment for her used Ford Explorer, along with bills for water, electricity and everything else her family needs.

"The economy is tough, tough. But we have to do the best we can," she said.

Kendema's struggles may be distinctive. But they are not unique. As Election Day draws nearer, a sizable majority of Americans — despite low unemployment, steady growth and rising wages — say they are dissatisfied with the economy.

The historic inflation that hit the United States and every other advanced nation over the past three years helps explain voters' ire. But conditions in Erie — a bellwether county that voted in turn for Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden — show how long-term developments also are to blame.

The county has fewer jobs and residents today than it did in 2001. Though the 3.9 percent unemployment rate in June was lower than the national 4.1 percent mark, that's in part because many people have dropped out of the labor force because of age or disability. The poverty rate is higher than the national average; a larger share of people rely on government

SEE PENNSYLVANIA ON A6

FBI arrests D.C. Council member Trayon White

This article is by Emily Davies, Perry Stein, Meagan Flynn, Keith L. Alexander, Michael Brice-Saddler, Joe Heim and Karina Elwood

The FBI arrested D.C. Council member Trayon White Sr. on Sunday, according to the council's chairman and two other people familiar with the matter, in a sudden move against the popular-yet-unorthodox Southeast Washington leader that appeared to take other city officials by surprise.

The circumstances of the arrest and the nature of the allegations against White, a Democrat who represents Ward 8 in Southeast Washington, were not immediately clear. The FBI's Washington Field Office declined to comment, and a representative for the U.S. attorney's office in Washington did not immediately return messages.

Frederick D. Cooke Jr., White's attorney who has represented a number of city officials over the years, including former mayor Marion Barry, said Sunday evening he had not been able to speak with White. "I am trying to get in contact with him and speak to my client and decide

SEE WHITE ON A2



PHOTOS BY ED RAM FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

For Russian civilians, a tense wait

People stranded in a Ukrainian-controlled town question what's next after Kyiv's incursion

BY SIOBHÁN O'GRADY AND TETIANA BURIANOVA

SUDZHA, RUSSIA — The blue and yellow lines painted on two signposts at the entrance to this Russian town offered unmistakable evidence that some citizens of Russia are living under Kyiv's control and Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine is really not going as planned.

On Saturday afternoon, 11 days after Ukrainian forces crossed into this Russian border region, soldiers patrolled Sudzha's damaged streets with bright blue tape on their arms, scanning the sky for incoming drones. Graffiti covered the front of a store, renaming it "ATB," a popular Ukrainian grocery chain. Russian flags had been removed from administration buildings, but blue-and-yellow Ukrainian ones were not flying.

Russian civilians — most of whom are elderly or disabled — slept on the basement floor of a former school or sat quietly in its courtyard, where troops handed them water and food.

The air reeked of smoke and death, and shrapnel and debris

SEE KURSK ON A14



TOP: A Ukrainian soldier walks past a building hit by shrapnel in the Ukrainian-controlled town of Sudzha, Russia, where Washington Post reporters were escorted Saturday by Ukrainian troops. ABOVE: People in a bomb shelter. For Ukrainian forces on the ground, the offensive is seen less as a conquest for long-term annexation and more as a negotiating tactic.

Putin's reaction: In times of crisis, Russia's leader often appears to freeze, despite his bellicose talk. A15

In Chicago, faint echoes of chaotic '68 convention

Protests loom over the 2024 meetup, but Democrats blow into the Windy City on a tide of optimism

BY JOEL ACHENBACH

The Democrats are converging on Chicago, scene of their greatest convention disaster. Even after 56 years the party can't forget the fiasco of 1968, when police battered protesters on Chicago streets, jeering and fistfights broke out in the convention hall and the bitterly divided delegates sent their nominee careening toward a defeat by Richard M. Nixon.

The return to Chicago this week comes amid echoes of 1968. The party has once again had to find its footing when the sitting president made a stunning decision to not seek reelection. Thousands of protesters are expected to march outside the convention and law enforcement is prepared for the possibility of violent disruptions. Cultural and generational divides in the party are pronounced. And there has been gunfire on the campaign trail, a jangling reminder that an election year can be turned upside down at



AP

Demonstrators gather before being chased from Chicago's Lincoln Park during the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

The mood: To some Democrats, it's feeling more like 2008. C1

Migrant tension: Chicago deals with influx as well as policy. A3

the speed of an assassin's bullet.

And yet despite those echoes, the Democrats are gliding into Chicago with little or no resemblance to the polarized and grieving party of 1968.

Unlike in 1968, the Democratic ticket is settled. The poll numbers are rising. The party activists are euphoric, with enthusiastic crowds greeting Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on the campaign trail.

And, unlike in 1968, there's just not much left to decide in Chicago. When President Joe Biden stepped aside, some party leaders and pundits advocated for a protracted nomination contest culminating at the convention. With stunning speed that idea evaporated. In just days, Harris became the consensus choice and is already officially the nominee.

"Democrats have already done the main thing that was necessary to avoid the chaos of 1968: They've unified in advance," said

SEE 1968 ON A4

ELECTION 2024

Biden prepares to pass the baton

WILL SPEAK ON FIRST DAY OF CONVENTION

Expected to set tone for Harris campaign ahead

BY MATT VISER

CHICAGO — President Joe Biden, through a lifetime of triumph and tragedy, has learned, in his words, to become a respecter of fate. Four years ago at this time, he felt like his biography had finally aligned with history: He was the right man at the right time in the right place.

Now, as his party gathers to rally around a new nominee, he is no longer fate's favorite. He will speak on the first day of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, and then he plans to leave for a family vacation as a jubilant convention goes on without him.

By the time the balloons drop on Thursday night before a rapturous crowd in Chicago, he will be long gone. And while he had hoped this week would be about rallying the party around his vision for a second term, he has now reoriented himself around bolstering Vice President Kamala Harris, a recognition that his legacy is deeply tied to whether she can win in November.

Biden, who spent the weekend at Camp David working on his speech with senior aides, replied when asked on Friday night what his message to Democrats would be: "Win."

When he takes the stage on Monday night, Democrats will mark Biden's half-century as one of their leaders. He will be surrounded by family; first lady Jill

SEE BIDEN ON A6

Right-wing influencers find fault in Trump aides

BY DREW HARWELL

Some of the internet's most influential far-right figures are turning against former president Donald Trump's campaign, threatening a digital "war" against the Republican candidate's aides and allies that could complicate the party's calls for unity in the final weeks of the presidential race.

Nick Fuentes, a white supremacist and podcaster who dined with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla., in 2022, said on X this month that Trump's campaign was "blowing it" by not positioning itself more to the right and was "headed for a catastrophic loss." As of Sunday, the post had been viewed 2.6 million times.

Laura Loomer, a far-right activist whom Trump last year called "very special," said his "weak" surrogates had unraveled his momentum and that his approach "needs to change FAST because we can't talk about a stolen election for another 4 years," in an X post that was "liked" more than 8,000 times.

And Candace Owens, a far-right influencer with 5 million X followers who was photographed

SEE TRUMP ON A5

IN THE NEWS

Life back home For the people released in a prisoner exchange with Russia, dramatic reunions have given way to the slow process of finding a new normal. A8

Fellow trailblazers Black women in politics reflect on the significance of Kamala Harris's presidential nomination. A10

THE NATION By how much can Harris expand the electoral map for Democrats? A2
Donald Trump escalated his gendered personal insults against Harris, rejecting GOP pressure to avoid such attacks. A9

THE WORLD Inflation has come for ramen, one of Japan's beloved cheap eats. A12
Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel to push a cease-fire deal as key sticking points remain. A13

THE ECONOMY New rules agreed to by the National Association of Realtors affect both buyers and sellers. A17

THE REGION Eagle Academy, a D.C. charter school facing money woes, is hoping Friendship Public Charter School will take over its campuses. B1

The Trump campaign has threatened to sue the Loudoun County GOP over sales of merchandise related to the failed attempt on the former president's life. B1
A man arrested in connection with gold bar fraud allegedly scammed an 80-year-old out of \$40,000 in cash. B1

STYLE A novel by the late writer Rebecca Godfrey imagines the complicated life of art collector Peggy Guggenheim. C1
Jools Lebron's satirical takes on how to be "demure" at work and in public have given the internet its latest buzzword. C1

BUSINESS NEWS.....A17
COMICS.....C6
OBITUARIES.....B4
OPINION PAGES.....A18
TELEVISION.....C4
WORLD NEWS.....A12

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