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Democracy Dies in Darkness

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2024 • \$5

ELECTION 2024

Harris tries to win back a soured tech sector

Silicon Valley, formerly a Democratic stronghold, has warmed to Trump

BY CAT ZAKRZEWSKI, NITASHA TIKU AND ELIZABETH DWOSKIN

Key members of Kamala Harris's inner circle are deploying across the country for fundraisers, private meetings and meals as part of an aggressive charm offensive to win back the support of the tech industry leaders who say they felt burned by President Joe Biden.

The overtures are intended to shore up support within a sector that was once viewed as a Democratic stronghold and helped propel Barack Obama to the White House in 2008. In this election season, some Silicon Valley power players have flocked to the Republican Party as former president Donald Trump campaigns alongside the most vocal and visible of them all, Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

The focus of Harris's push is to convince top tech executives and investors that the vice president will chart her own course on regulating Big Tech and cryptocurrency. The engagement has raised uncomfortable questions for Harris as she faces pressure from tech donors to take a more business-friendly approach to antitrust enforcement and cryptocurrency — as well as wariness from party liberals that she will go easy on the sector.

The candidate is steering clear of making the hard promises
SEE HARRIS ON A10

Trump, RFK Jr.: Two improbable avatars for Americans' health. **A2**

Maps: How votes were cast in each state, and how it's changing. **A16**

BETWEEN THE BORDER AND THE WALL



KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Gates along the border wall in Texas allow access to the thousands of acres of land between the barrier and the Rio Grande.

Expanding the barrier would leave more U.S. land on the wrong side

BY NICK MIROFF, KIRSTEN LUCE, LARIS KARKLIS AND FRANK HULLEY-JONES IN LA CASITA, TEX.

In the fields south of this farm town, unfinished segments of the U.S. border wall jut from the ground with gaps between them as wide as a house.

The steel structures, painted jet black at the order of Donald Trump when he was president, are the largest objects for miles around, looking more like an abstract art project than instruments of U.S. national security.

Scrawled on one of the panels is the date they were installed: 1-13-21. One week before President Joe Biden took office and brought construction to a halt.

Trump is campaigning as the Republican nominee for president on a vow to finish the project that fueled his first White House run in 2016 and has animated his rallies ever

since. Polls show there is more public support for the border wall than ever. But a resumption of major construction would contribute to a peculiar issue with the barrier in South Texas.

The U.S.-Mexico border is defined in Texas by the Rio Grande, but the government does not install 30-foot-tall steel barriers in the middle of a river, let alone on its looping, unstable banks. So the border wall in South Texas isn't built on the border.

At some locations, the wall has been placed as far as two miles away from the Rio Grande, leaving thousands of acres in the liminal space between the border and the barrier.

SEE BORDER ON A13

In north of Gaza, no letup in strikes

SCORES KILLED, ENTIRE BLOCK RAZED

Israel says goal is to stop Hamas from regrouping

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK, HEBA FAROUK MAHFOUZ, HAZEM BALOUSA AND HAJAR HARB

BEIRUT — At least 73 people were killed when an Israeli airstrike slammed into a group of homes in the northern Gaza Strip, the civil defense force said Saturday, as Israel's military intensified operations there just days after President Joe Biden suggested that the death of Hamas's leader could usher in an end to the ruinous war.

The bombing targeted the town of Beit Lahia, less than two miles from the border with Israel, late on Saturday. The entire block was "leveled to the ground," said Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesman for Gaza's civil defense, adding that there were a large number of people still under the rubble.

The Israeli military said in a statement that the strike was against "a Hamas terror target."

"We emphasize that the area in question is an active war zone," the military said.

Israeli forces launched a new operation in northern Gaza earlier this month, ramping up strikes and shelling, ordering swaths of the region to evacuate, and laying siege to the Jabalya refugee camp, still home to about 40,000 people, according to United Nations estimates. Nearly 500 Palestinians have been killed in the two-week operation, Bassal said by phone.

Israeli officials say troops are
SEE GAZA ON A19

Aid convoys: U.N. says Israel has opened fire at least four times. **A19**

FDA pivots on scarcity of weight drugs after outcry

BY DANIEL GILBERT

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, after intense public pressure and a lawsuit, is reconsidering its declaration barely two weeks ago that a shortage of the appetite-suppressing drugs Mounjaro and Zepbound is over, a temporary about-face that will allow pharmacies to keep selling unbranded copies.

The extraordinary turn of events has caused confusion for patients who rely on the cheaper, off-brand versions and for the compounding pharmacies that have been allowed to make them as long as the official shortage continued.

The FDA's sudden shift highlights challenges regulators and the pharmaceutical industry have faced amid unprecedented demand for the blockbuster weight-loss drugs.

"The credibility of the FDA in this case has suffered," said Mariana Social, a Johns Hopkins professor who specializes in drug shortages. She attributed the agency's flip-flop to its surveillance system, which by law relies heavily on information from
SEE FDA ON A12



CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Benny, 4, has explosive meltdowns and other behavioral issues because of lead poisoning.

Lead paint upended this boy's life

The EPA hopes tighter standards make him among the last

BY AMUDALAT AJASA AND CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. — The home Jade Shirey bought over a decade ago was a bargain and exactly what she needed for her growing family. But she knew it needed some touch-ups, and after a few years, she turned her attention to the chipping, dark-red-painted wood under the carpet. She started sanding the painted floors, before staining the wood.

She had been remodeling the stairs for two months when she took her son, Benny, to his 1-year-old checkup. A finger prick showed he tested positive for lead levels four times higher than the national standard at the time. The lead paint hidden beneath the floorboards had turned into clouds of dust, poisoning him.

Nearly a half century after the federal government banned lead-based paints in homes across the country, the Environmental Protection
SEE LEAD ON A6

A lonely stand that lit a political firestorm

The whistleblower whose complaint triggered Trump's first impeachment asks: Was it worth it?

BY GREG JAFFE

The young CIA analyst waited anxiously for Fiona Hill to pick up her phone. He had dialed her, he recalled, because he wanted to hear a familiar voice and make sure he wasn't doing something "colossally stupid."

Five years later Hill's memories of the call are still vivid: the CIA analyst's voice, which sounded uncharacteristically emotional; the annoying clatter of the Frappuccino machine inside the Starbucks where she was waiting for her morning coffee.

Hill stepped into the parking lot. She was on vacation in Hawaii, having just resigned a week earlier from her job in Donald Trump's White House overseeing Russia, Ukraine and dozens of other European and Eurasian countries. She and the analyst had spoken often as part of their official duties.

Because they were talking on an unclassified phone line, the analyst had to be vague. In the weeks before Hill left government, she had become concerned that figures close to the president, including his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, were trying to pressure Ukrainian officials for personal

and political favors.

"Something else happened on that thing you were worried about," the analyst told her. The time had come, he said, for him to do something "extreme."

"Oh dear, oh dear," Hill recalled muttering.

The CIA analyst would soon submit a meticulously sourced nine-page memo to the U.S. intelligence community inspector general that would spark Trump's first impeachment. In Washington and around the world, the analyst would be known as "the whistleblower," a moniker that he didn't choose and has come to see as a burden.

In the half decade since his complaint kicked off a political firestorm, the analyst has declined all requests to speak publicly about his actions, even as he has reckoned privately with whether they made a difference. Did his lonely stand help to check what he saw as Trump's bad behavior or reveal the weakness of the guardrails around the presidency? Did it strengthen his country's democracy or lay bare its flaws?

He described his experience, which included death threats that
SEE WHISTLEBLOWER ON A5

METRO

Still tense from Jan. 6, D.C. braces for what this election may bring.

SPORTS

By blending present and past, the Commanders are trying to "Raise Hail."



BOOK WORLD

John le Carré's son made his own name. Now he's reviving George Smiley.

ARTS & STYLE

Mikey Madison dances to Oscar contention playing a plucky stripper.



TRAVEL

Paragliding over the Swiss Alps offers a peak sightseeing experience.

BUSINESS

This threat expert hunts U.S. foes exploiting AI to sway the election.

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The Washington Post / Year 147, No. 54010

