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Partly sunny 71/50 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny 65/52 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

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PHOTOS BY ILAN GODFREY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Community members from Kanyelele Town, Zambia, swim on the banks of the lake created by the Kariba Dam.

Zambia's green energy is running dry

For a while, it looked like Zambia had achieved a status that almost any nation would envy.

Drawing hydropower from the massive Zambezi River and its tributaries, the country could meet its energy needs while producing almost zero planet-warming emissions. It was renewable energy of the best kind — cheap and seemingly abundant. Zambia's recently departed environment minister touted the country's green credentials in dozens of speeches for international crowds.

But that was all before an epic drought that slowed the Zambezi to a trickle and brought water levels to nearly the lowest point on record.

Intermittent outages started in March and gradually intensified as the hydropower generators switched off.

And Zambia, for several months now, has plunged into near-total darkness.

Hydropower had long provided cheap, clean power — until drought set in

BY CHICO HARLAN
IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA



Water levels are so low in the Kariba Dam that Zambia's hydropower plant is operating at one-tenth of its capacity.

"We were swimming in happiness that we were largely green," Zambia's president, Hakainde Hichilema, said in an interview at his office last month. "The drought has told us that even when we were largely green, it was a risk."

Hydropower is the world's most widely used form of renewable energy, propelling development in South America, parts of China and India, and much of sub-Saharan Africa. But over the past two years, a wave of extreme droughts has wreaked havoc on this critical energy supply. As the Earth warms, this once promising resource is becoming less reliable in meeting the needs of the growing population — in some instances leading to desperation and potential political instability.

Factories shut down. People struggle to find water and cook. And measures aimed at short-term survival wind up damaging

SEE ZAMBIA ON A10

Biden allows Kyiv to use long-range missiles in Russia

POLICY SHIFT AFTER N. KOREAN DEPLOYMENT

Escalation fears drove opposition to use of U.S. arms

BY ELLEN NAKASHIMA,
MICHAEL BIRNBAUM,
JOHN HUDSON
AND ALEX HORTON

President Joe Biden has authorized Ukraine to use a powerful American long-range weapon for limited strikes inside Russia in response to North Korea's deployment of thousands of troops to aid Moscow's war effort, according to two senior U.S. officials.

The easing of restrictions on allowing Kyiv to use the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, to hit targets inside Russia is a significant reversal in U.S. policy and comes as some 10,000 elite North Korean troops have been sent to Kursk, a region of Russia along Ukraine's northern border, to help Moscow's forces retake territory gained by Ukraine.

The Biden administration fears that more North Korean special forces units could follow in sup-

port of this effort.

The move precedes by two months the return to the White House of President-elect Donald Trump, who has signaled he intends to end the war between Russia and Ukraine, though without offering details of how he will do so.

One U.S. official said the move is in part aimed at deterring Pyongyang from sending more troops. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un must understand that the initial deployment has been a "costly" mistake, said the official, who like others interviewed for this story spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity.

The initial Ukrainian effort is expected to focus on and around the Kursk region, though it could expand, according to the official and another person familiar with the matter.

SEE UKRAINE ON A9

NIH critic becomes a top candidate to lead agency

Bhattacharya's views on covid were once rebuked by public health leaders

BY DAN DIAMOND

When three academics in October 2020 insisted it was time to roll back coronavirus lockdowns — writing an open letter known as the Great Barrington Declaration that attracted hundreds of thousands of signatures — public health leaders rebuked their proposal as premature. Francis S. Collins, then director of the National Institutes of Health, pri-

vately dismissed the authors as "fringe" experts and called for a "take down" of their suggestions to reopen schools and businesses, according to emails subsequently released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Now, one of the authors of that declaration — Jay Bhattacharya, a Stanford University physician and economist — appears poised for a top government health role, perhaps as head of NIH itself. Bhattacharya is a strong candidate to lead the nearly \$50 billion agency in the coming Trump administration, with his name on an internal list of contenders being compiled by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., according to four people who

SEE BHATTACHARYA ON A2

In a battle of bard vs. bot, these readers pick ChatGPT

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON

The robots may take our jobs, but they'll never come for our sonnets. Right?

A new study in the journal *Scientific Reports* finds that non-expert readers can't reliably distinguish between poems penned by William Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot or Sylvia Plath and ChatGPT-3.5 doing its best impression of each of them. More surprising, readers preferred the AI-generated poems — and were more likely to guess those were written by humans than real works by famous poets.

"It is quite a weird phenomenon," said Edouard Machery, a philosopher at the University of Pittsburgh who carried out the study with Brian Porter, a former postdoctoral researcher.

Poetry may seem like an unimpeachable bastion of human creativity, an art governed by rhyme, meter and form that distills distinctly human experiences and feelings in a way no machine can elicit. "When you're in a state of

SEE AI ON A13

After Trump's victory, an identity crisis strikes

Majority-Latino student body at an urban high school wrestles with their place in the country

BY GREG JAFFE

ALLENTOWN, PA. — The students had awoken to the news of Donald Trump's presidential victory only an hour earlier and were still processing what it would mean for them and their families.

About a dozen gathered in the cafeteria of their high school, which sits on the edge of this former industrial city's struggling urban core. All were Latino. They had spent Election Day as poll workers, helping non-English speakers, the elderly and the disabled cast their ballots.

Shannon Salter, one of the school's civics teachers, asked them about their work, and the students, talking over one another in bursts of teenage enthusiasm, spoke of the feeling of importance it gave them. After a few minutes, the conversation turned toward the inevitable.

"So, how do you feel about the result?" Salter asked.

"I hate it. I hate it," said Adriana Rodriguez, 17. "Oh my God, I hate the stupid result."

One of the students complained that she was tired of all the election talk. "Let's worry

SEE ALLENTOWN ON A18



CAROLINE GUTMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Senior Iliany DeLeon, center, and her friends record a video of a dance during lunch at Building 21, a public high school in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Trump's FCC candidate has vowed to take on 'censorship'

BY EVA DOU
AND CRISTIANO LIMA-STRONG

President-elect Donald Trump said Sunday he was naming Brendan Carr as the next Federal Communications Commission chairman, positioning the regulatory agency to do battle against social media companies and TV broadcasters that Republicans portray as too liberal.

Carr, 45, the senior Republican among the FCC's five commissioners, has vowed in recent days to take on what he called a "censorship cartel" including Facebook, Google, Apple and Microsoft. Earlier this year, he laid out an aggressive agenda for the FCC in Project 2025, a conservative proposal for Trump's second term developed by the Heritage Foundation. Carr has been a vocal supporter of billionaire Elon Musk and an advocate of tougher restrictions on China.

"Commissioner Carr is a warrior for Free Speech, and has fought against the regulatory Lawfare that has stifled Americans'

SEE FCC ON A6

IN THE NEWS

The fight over education Donald Trump, who vowed to push schools to the right on gender and race, is now set to press the culture war from the seat of power in Washington. A4

Biden in the Amazon In the first visit to the rainforest by a sitting U.S. president, he emphasized the threat of climate change. A7

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Some prominent critics of Trump, fearful of his vow of revenge, are preparing go bags and seeking foreign passports. A12

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A century-old U.S. tax rule is one reason for low prices from Temu, Shein and Amazon Haul. A14

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A Maryland agency has recommended knocking down and replacing the eastbound and westbound spans of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. B1

Facing budget cuts, American University may restructure its School of Education, potentially moving it into a larger college. B1
A Democratic state delegate and a GOP schools activist won nominations in the race to succeed Virginia state Sen. Suhas Subramanyam. B4

STYLE
The Smithsonian Institution quietly removed the director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum this summer and placed her in another role after years of staff complaints. C1
Cassie told her story — and launched music's #MeToo reckoning. C1

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