

The Washington Post

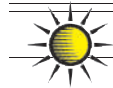
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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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ELECTION 2024

Russia's liberal activists fractured

Feuding, even a hammer attack: Putin opposition's latest obstacle is itself

BY FRANCESCA EBEL, MARY ILYUSHINA, CATHERINE BELTON AND ROBYN DIXON

LONDON — They share the dream of a Russia without President Vladimir Putin, but the Russian opposition is at each other's throats — again.

With Russia's war against Ukraine in its third year and with no end in sight, opposition supporters say it has never been more urgent to form an effective, united front against Putin, as the number of soldiers dying on the front rises, the Kremlin imposes new taxes to fund the military and society only grows more nationalistic and repressive.

But a scandal that sparked accusations that one opposition figure orchestrated a shocking attack with a hammer on another — a claim denied publicly — shows how the splits have intensified since the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny this year.

Many Russians who want to see change are increasingly doubtful that the opposition in its current form can lead the fight to transform the country.

"It is a disparate array of individuals and small groups who basically do not even pretend to be one, who do not have a vision for Russia that they share and that they would put forward," said Maria Lipman, editor of Russia.Post and a visiting scholar at George Washington University.

Russia's liberal opposition has long struggled to gain a foothold in the political system, not least because of constant infighting since its emergence in the 1990s. The environment in the country changed dramatically with the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, however, and most political activists and opposition figures were forced into exile. Any who

SEE RUSSIA ON A14



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

Lock Haven is in Pennsylvania's Clinton County, which has steadily become more Republican in recent decades.

In Pennsylvania, uncertainty all over

Trip through most critical battleground state finds voters full of doubt, anger and unease

BY DAN BALZ

In 2024, the road to the White House runs through Pennsylvania.

Of the seven battleground states, Pennsylvania represents the biggest prize with 19 electoral votes. There is almost no way for Vice President Kamala Harris or former president Donald Trump to win the election without it.

The focus on Pennsylvania this fall has

been singular. The two campaigns have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on advertisements targeting voters, more than anyplace else. Rare is the day that Harris or Trump, or their running mates, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota or Sen. JD Vance of Ohio, are not somewhere in the state. Often two of the four are there.

Trump won the state in 2016 by 44,000 votes — less than a percentage point — on his way to an upset victory over Hillary

Clinton. Joe Biden carried it in 2020 by about 81,000 votes — a margin of 1.2 percentage points.

Recent polling has shown the state in a statistical dead heat. The Washington Post average of polls currently shows Harris 2 percentage points ahead of Trump. In 2020, the final poll average showed Biden ahead by 4 points, 3 points better than he did.

SEE PENNSYLVANIA ON A6

Swing states hit hard by rising housing prices

BY ABHA BHATTARAI AND FEDERICA COCCO

WILMINGTON, N.C. — A multi-year surge in home prices has hit hardest in the swing states that are likely to determine the outcome of the 2024 presidential campaign, suggesting that America's housing affordability crisis is weighing heavily as the nation's most sought-after voters head to the polls.

Americans in swing states are far more likely to live in areas

The home affordability crisis weighs heavily on most-sought-after voters

where housing has become disproportionately more costly since 2019, according to a Washington Post analysis of home-price data. Nationally, home prices have grown 48 percent since 2019. But in some counties across

the seven most tightly contested swing states — including Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania — prices have more than doubled, an analysis of Zillow data shows.

That means a majority of swing-state voters — who already cite the economy as their top concern — are facing outside burdens from high home prices and rents.

"This is no longer just a big coastal city problem," said Dennis Shea, executive director of the J. Ronald Terwilliger Center for

Housing Policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center. "Housing affordability is poor everywhere, and home prices have gone up dramatically in all seven swing states since 2019."

The Post analyzed a broad swath of economic data in swing

SEE HOUSING ON A4

Trump: In a visit to McDonald's, he briefly manned the fry station. **A3**

Harris: Anti-Trump Republicans are central campaign messengers. **A9**

An American dream, blown away by a hurricane



EVA MARIE UZCATEGUI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Elena Gonzalez looks at her family's burned-out home in Cape Coral, Fla., after Hurricane Milton.

Storms have been costly for Latino families on Florida's Gulf Coast

BY ARELIS R. HERNÁNDEZ

CAPE CORAL, FLA. — It took a mere glance at the roofless, blackened skeleton of her home for Elena Gonzalez's sorrow to overwhelm her. The tears fell more quickly than she could dab them dry.

Her next-door neighbor walked toward her, shaking a finger. There wasn't much to recover from the home that burned during Hurricane Milton when a power line fell on its roof. But it was still standing.

"I don't want to see another tear," Dorita Machin, 72, said. "You came to this country from Cuba with nothing. You have to keep going."

Gonzalez and her husband built here, in Cape Coral, after getting priced out of Miami — the historical destination for generations of Cuban Americans and

SEE HURRICANES ON A15



NICK WASS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A win and an injury

Brian Robinson Jr., right, and Marcus Mariota helped the Commanders rout the Panthers, 40-7, but rookie quarterback Jayden Daniels exited early with a rib injury. **Sports, D1**

IN THE NEWS

Gen Z seeks office Raised in an age of political chaos, these young candidates see state politics as the solution. **A10**

Caught in a crossfire Residents of some Christian towns in Lebanon — and their priests — are staying put as Israel and Hezbollah fight all around them. **A12**

THE NATION

Where do Donald Trump's criminal cases stand in the weeks ahead of the election? **A2**
Kamala Harris urged Black churchgoers to vote against "chaos, fear and hate." **A4**

THE WORLD

Iranians fear an Israeli reprisal to a recent missile attack will destabilize the economy and stir unrest at a time when Tehran has been weakened by its allies' combat losses. **A13**

THE ECONOMY

Hurricane misinformation is just one piece of America's rumor habit, Shira Ovide writes. **A17**

THE REGION

Realtor John Coleman has built a devoted online following with his bite-size video tours of D.C. homes. **B1**

Prosecutors secured their first conviction in gold bar seams that have cost Montgomery County residents more than \$6 million. **B1**

After centuries of decay, the bell tower at St. John's Church in downtown Washington has undergone a \$1.9 million renovation. **B1**

OBITUARIES

Joyce Hens Green, 95, helped blaze a trail for women in the law while serving as an attorney and federal judge in Washington. **B1**

STYLE

Democrats dream of a blue Texas. What will they wake up to in November? **C1**

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