# The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

SU V1 V2 V3 V4

**Showers 63/45** • Tomorrow: Cloudy, breezy 52/40

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2026 · **$4**


## The shabby golf course at heart of D.C. facelift

After the president set eyes on it, administration officials moved quickly

BY RICK MAESE

Every city with enough golfers has one: the scruffy municipal course whose shortcomings are part of its charm.

Washington has East Potomac Golf Links, 36 holes of cheap golf and priceless views on a weathered patch of federal parkland.

Beginners hack their way around the nine-hole, par-3 Red course. Better players tackle the 18-hole Blue. Retirees, tourists, government workers and Hill staffers squeeze in nine on the White. From tee boxes and greens across the peninsula, they do it with a view of the Washington Monument rising above the trees. A beer costs $7 and a half-smoke $5.

For all its flaws, golfers cannot get enough of it. In 2025, they played 124,960 rounds there, making East Potomac the busiest public golf facility in the Washington region.

And for years, President Donald Trump has been looking down at it.

The Marine One route between the White House and Joint Base Andrews passes over the course, which is tucked onto a narrow peninsula between the Potomac River and Washington Channel. Trump took a brief interest in the property during his first term, but nothing came of it.

Four years later, though, Trump returned to power with considerably larger ambitions for reshaping the capital, launching efforts to build a White House ballroom, remake the Kennedy Center, erect a triumphal arch, create a sculpture garden hon-

SEE **GOLF COURSE** ON **A8**

## Gratitude for those who serve



MATT MCCLAIN/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

From left, seated, World War II veterans Calvin Shiner, Bob Hartline, Bill Glaspie, Arlester Brown, Jack Kraszewski and Don Graves gather for a Veterans Day ceremony Wednesday at the World War II Memorial in Washington.

## Inside the knotty saga of Trump's arch dreams

He has maneuvered to the brink of construction, but a lawsuit could spoil plans

BY DAN DIAMOND

President Donald Trump is poised to begin building a 250-foot-tall arch — the moment a federal court lifts an order pausing its construction.

Trump continues to want the arch, potentially emblazoned with the slogan "Golden Age of America," built outside the gates of Arlington National Cemetery, administration officials say. To do so, however, he'll have to navigate new roadblocks: an incoming Congress that has vowed to oppose his projects, federal judges wary of how Trump outraced the courts to build his White House ballroom and growing resistance from Washington's residents and leaders.

"The people of D.C. do not support this 250-foot arch," Mayor-elect Janeese Lewis George said in a statement to The Washington Post, adding that the arch could harm local traffic, emergency evacuation routes and the "sacred" military cemetery itself.

Lewis George's statement sharply contrasts with Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's silence on the topic for most of the past year.

Trump visited the cemetery on Wednesday to mark Veterans Day, where he pledged again to complete his project and cast it as a tribute to military service. The arch would rise in Memorial Circle, a traffic roundabout tucked inside Washington's boundaries and by the cemetery's entrance.

"Soon we're going to dedicate a magnificent triumphal arch to our veterans," Trump said.

Since he was first pitched on the idea last year, the president has prioritized the arch more than most of his other construction plans, placing it alongside the ballroom in his pantheon of legacy projects. Administration officials say he's drawn to the arch by its size, dramatic sweep

SEE **ARCH** ON **A4**

## Colom notches upset in Miss.

DEMOCRAT IN SOUTH FLIPS SENATE SEAT

State's first Black senator since Reconstruction

BY ROBERT SAMUELS

Scott Colom, a local district attorney, officially won a seat in the U.S. Senate, the Associated Press said Wednesday, a breathtaking victory that solidified the Democrats' ascendance in Washington and the potential for a political realignment in the South.

From a state that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to as "sweltering with the heat of injustice," Colom is the first Black man popularly elected statewide in Mississippi and its first Black senator since Reconstruction. The state has long been associated with political dispositions that would have rendered Colom's rise as an African American and a Democrat unthinkable — from its poll taxes and literacy test in the Jim Crow era, to the murders of activists trying to register Black people to vote, to aligning with deeply conservative politics that propelled Donald Trump to a 22-point win in Mississippi in 2024.

"Some leaders will fall into the trap of saying, 'I'm going to divide the voters and I'm going to distract them,'" Colom, 43, recently told The Washington Post. "That strategy has worked a lot in the past, but I had been closer to the ground. ... I had to do some advertising, but I knew if I could raise enough money and talk about the issues that matter,

SEE **MISSISSIPPI** ON **A6**

## A collision of China policy and spy scandal

President's warnings about Beijing undercut by close ties to tech CEOs

BY CAT ZAKRZEWSKI, WARREN P. STROBEL AND ISAAC ARNSDORF

Just a week before President Donald Trump is expected to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Shenzhen, a burgeoning espionage scandal is exposing a contradiction at the center of his approach to America's chief military and economic rival.

Throughout his second term, Trump has repeatedly warned that the United States cannot afford to fall behind China in the race for artificial intelligence, invoking the threat from Beijing to justify opposition to regulation of the rapidly advancing technology. Yet he has approved the sale of advanced technology to China that hawks in his administration argued could help Beijing close the technological gap with the United States.

And when allegations emerged

SEE **CHINA** ON **A13**



JUAN CARLOS CISNEROS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**A person holds a cutout depicting Pope Leo XIV in Lima on Wednesday ahead of the pontiff's arrival.**

## Mammoth crowds greet Pope Leo in Peru

The first American pontiff spent decades in the country as a missionary and bishop

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA AND SAMANTHA SCHMIDT

LIMA — He was born in Chicago. But when Pope Leo XIV touched down Wednesday in Peru for the final leg of his South American tour, the cleric previously known as Robert Francis Prevost came home.

Upon landing at an air force base on the outer edge of the capital, the pope appeared emotional as he was greeted by ecstatic crowds. For a pope naturalized as a Peruvian citizen in 2015, a remarkable multitude of some 3 million people, according to the Vatican, citing Peruvian authorities — a record for his papacy — lined the route of his welcome convoy for miles into the city, some in tears, others lifting hands in prayer, most training cellular phones. They roared as their adopted son returned.

The record-breaking crowd greeted the pope in Peru just days after he'd set a record for his papacy in Argentina, where some 2.5 million swarmed to his Mass in Buenos Aires on Mon-

SEE **POPE** ON **A12**

## White House braces for blitz of Democratic investigations

Trump administration beefs up its staffing in preparation for legal fights

BY KATHERINE DOYLE

The White House, anticipating a surge of congressional oversight and legislative probes, has started staffing up its counsel's office — with 15 additional hires so far — as it prepares to do legal battle.

Investigations are expected to ramp up aggressively in January.

"The last time around, Dems were very deliberate about pacing subpoenas," said Brandon Rios, who was counsel to Democrats on the House Oversight Committee. "This time, I'd be shocked if we don't see them in January."

"The investigations start now," said Rios, who now co-leads the congressional investigations group at the law firm DLA Piper.

The aggressive pushback has already begun: On Wednesday, the White House released a letter from White House counsel Will Scharf accusing Democrats of making "abusive and capricious threats" that aim to "interfere with the lawful functioning of government."

The letter to Rep. Robert Garcia (D-California), who is expected to chair the House Oversight Committee in the new Congress, made clear that the administration would resist congressional subpoenas on the grounds that they lack a "legitimate legislative purpose." It went further to suggest that the administration might try to investigate the investigators, saying that "threats to executive branch officials" would go beyond Congress's legitimate oversight role and "may cross the line into blatant criminality."

The prospect of sustained clashes between the White House and a Democratic Congress already has private companies and law firms building up their staffs to prepare for an onslaught. Advisers and allies to President Donald Trump have lawyered up. And K Street lobbying firms are readying for questions from congressional committees looking to probe their ties to an administration that has not shied from its image of being open for business.

Preparations inside the White House began well before the election. David Warrington, then the incoming White House counsel, began planning for congressional oversight hearings as far back as the presidential transition in 2024. That work picked up this year as White House lawyers realized that Republicans could lose the House.

Lawyers from the counsel's office have been meeting with

SEE **INVESTIGATIONS** ON **A5**

## IN THE NEWS

**War in Ukraine** Following the first direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv after a nine-month pause, negotiators agreed to a prisoner exchange but little else. **A11**

**Mediterranean trip** A top State Department official took a vacation last year paid for by a tech billionaire, according to a disclosure. **A3**

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