

# The Washington Post

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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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PHOTO BY ANDREW BERNETT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Utah city's boom might run dry

In America's fastest-growing metro area, development runs up against drought

BY KARIN BRILLIARD

LEEDS, UTAH — A century after her grandfather arrived to start a living out of the box, red dirt here, Susan Savage still experiences her life around the groundwater. Twice daily, she checks the well her family's pump-out, orchards and animals depend on, watching its level drop in recent years amid punishing drought.

Those days, she and some others in this rural town of fewer than 1,000 people are casting a wary eye 15 miles south, where St. George, the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area, is churning out homes — and scrambling to find new water sources to support that boom, including deep underground near here.

St. George and surrounding Washington County, two hours northeast of Las Vegas in Utah's hottest and driest corner, was once



TOP: Youth walk along the Virgin River, the main water source for St. George, Utah, which is increasingly under pressure as the area experiences explosive population growth. ABOVE: Homes are under construction as the Desert Color housing development. Its developers have prioritized water conservation.

## 1 in 3 women have mostly lost access to abortion

MORE STATE BANS, RESTRICTIONS EXPECTED

Rapid changes in two months after reversal of Roe

BY KATH SHEPHERD, RACHEL ROBBINS AND CAROLINE KITCHENER

Two months after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, about 20.9 million women have lost access to nearly all elective abortions in their home states, and a slant of strict new trigger laws expected to take effect in the coming days will shut out even more.

Texas, Tennessee and Idaho all have existing restrictions on abortion, but the laws slated to begin Thursday will either outlaw the procedure entirely or heighten penalties for doctors who perform an abortion, contributing to a seismic shift in who can access abortion in their home states.

At least 11 other states have banned most abortions, prohibi-

ting the procedure with narrow exceptions from the time of conception or after fetal cardiac activity is detected, at about six weeks of pregnancy, with legislation known as "heartbeat" laws. The more states have similar bans temporarily blocked by the courts. If those injunctions are lifted, abortion could soon be inaccessible for millions more — in total, 35 percent of U.S. women between the ages of 15 and 44 would be largely unable to obtain an elective abortion in the state where they live.

The rapid pace of change has shocked even the closest observers.

"I just thought there would be a

Abortion laws: A judge will decide if an Idaho ban can take effect. [A](#)

## Car-bomb killing rattles backers of Putin's war

Russian propagandists grapple with heightened fear for their own safety

BY ROBYN DIXON AND MARY ELYSENA

A top Russian propagandist who cheerleads for the war against Ukraine was walking in a Moscow park this weekend when one of her personal security guards sprinted ahead, alarmed by a child's ball on a nearby bench. It could have been a bomb.

"If I had the task of eliminating you, I would have done just that —

I would have put just a ball along your path," the bodyguard told Margarita Simonyan, the editor in chief of the state-owned RT television news network, who recommended the episode on Telegram.

Hours after Simonyan's park stroll, another Kremlin propaganda star, Daria Dugina, was killed by a car bomb in a Moscow suburb. The daughter of far-right nationalist Alexander Dugin died in a fiery blast near one of the most exclusive enclaves for the capital's powerful, wealthy elite.

Russia's domestic security service, the FSB, on Monday ac-

Prospect of an escalation: Russia blames Ukraine for the blast. [A](#)

## Election deniers given access to voting files

Sensitive information on server was downloaded dozens of times

BY JON SWANDE, AARON C. DAVIS, AMY GARDNER AND EMMA BROWN

Sensitive election system files obtained by attorneys working to overturn President Donald Trump's 2020 defeat were shared with election deniers, conspiracy theorists and right-wing commentators, according to records reviewed by The Washington Post.

A Georgia computer forensics firm, hired by the attorney,

placed the files on a server, where company records show they were downloaded dozens of times. Among the downloads were accounts associated with a Texas meteorologist who has appeared on Sean Hannity's radio show, a podcaster who suggested political deniers should be executed, a former pro surfer who pushed discredited theories that the 2020 election was manipulated, and a self-described former "nutrition and pickup coach" who claims to also have been a hacker.

Plaintiffs in a long-running federal lawsuit over the security of Georgia's voting systems obtained the new records from the company. Atlanta-based Sullivan Strickler, under a subpoena to one of its executives. The records include contracts between the

## Fauci to depart in December

As government service winds down, he looks ahead to next chapter

BY YARMEEN ARUTALIER



ARUTALIER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Anthony S. Fauci became the public face of the government's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Anthony S. Fauci, the nation's preeminent infectious disease expert who achieved unprecedented fame while undergirding political attacks as the face of the coronavirus pandemic response under two presidents, plans to step down in December after more than a half-century of public service, he announced Monday.

Fauci, 81, has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 2014. He joined the parent agency, the National Institutes of Health, in 1968 as a 27-year-old doctor who had just finished medical residency and was quickly identified as a rising star. Most recently, Fauci has also served as President Biden's chief

## Weapons aid may presage a new phase in Ukraine

BY ALEX HORTON

The Pentagon is sending new weapons and equipment to Ukraine that will better prepare its military to fight Russian troops at closer ranges, potentially signaling that Kyiv and its backers see an opportunity to retake lost ground after weeks of grinding artillery duels along the front lines.

Ukrainian officials have been openly discussing an offensive on the Russian-held strategic port city of Kherson, but there is little evidence along the front lines that Ukraine is prepared to execute an operation that would