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ELECTION 2026

Region voters trickle to polls

Many likely cast ballots early, but primary turnout appears low

By Trevor Metcalfe, Maggie Allwein and Stacy Parker
STAFF WRITERS

Hampton Roads slowly headed to the polls Tuesday morning to pick candidates in several

high-profile congressional races. Voters are choosing a Democratic challenger for 2nd District Rep. Jen Kiggans and 1st District Rep. Rob Wittman, as well as a Republican who will face U.S. Sen. Mark Warner.

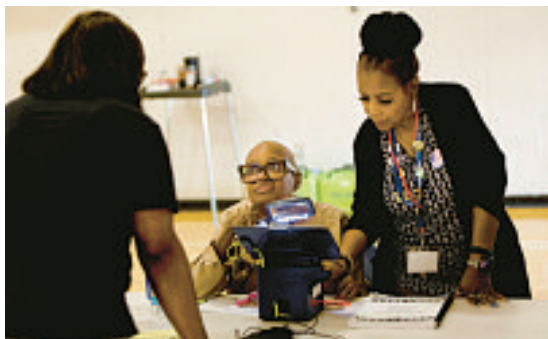
It was a quiet morning at Virginia Beach's Larkspur Middle School — in the 2nd District. An election official said about 30 people had voted by 9 a.m. Mary Anne Doty, with 2nd District candi-

date Nila Devanath's campaign, said more Democrats were choosing to vote early.

Marcia McGrath, 71, said she had voted in every primary and general election since she was 18. She said the the fight for democracy is the biggest issue that brought her to the polls.

"We're losing it," said McGrath, who voted in the Democratic

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Poll workers Will Seward, middle, and Deborah Elliott check a voter in Tuesday at Larkspur Middle School in Virginia Beach. **STEPHEN M. KATZ/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT**



Bo Lusk, a coastal scientist with the Nature Conservancy, talks about the extend of the seagrass restoration project off the coast of Oyster. **PETER CASEY/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT**

DRASTIC DISRUPTION

Residents, environmentalists weigh in as Trump mulls opening Virginia federal waters to mineral mining

By Maggie Allwein
STAFF WRITER

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY — Miles of clear, blue-green water span Virginia's coastal peninsula, broken up by barrier islands and thriving salt marshes. The pristine environment offers a critical habitat for countless marine and bird species, and the largest seagrass restoration in the world.

With roughly 133,000 acres of conserved land off the Eastern Shore, the Nature Conservancy's Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve owns or manages about 40,000 acres and 14 barrier islands.

But these preserved waters could be in for a drastic disruption. Federal officials are considering the area as the trial location to lease land for seabed mining in the Atlantic Ocean. Environmental experts, including

from the reserve, are sounding the alarm out of concern for water quality and ecosystems they believe would be under threat from such development.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management put forth a request for information and interest (RFI) on June 23 regarding proposals for seabed mining along the majority of the Eastern Shore coastline. The activity extracts critical mineral resources from the ocean floor. The proposed mining area runs between 3 and 63 miles offshore.

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Iran, Oman seek deal to open strait

Regional officials say any pact linked to US lifting port blockade

By Samy Magdy, Aamer Madhani and Matthew Lee
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO — Iran and the Gulf Arab state of Oman have made progress toward a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a potential breakthrough that could help wind down the war in the Middle East, regional officials said Tuesday.

Under the emerging agreement, ships would enter the Persian Gulf through an Iranian-controlled route and exit through a route controlled by Oman, with service fees charged for providing security and preserving the maritime environment, two regional officials told Associated Press.

They said negotiations are still underway and that the final agreement could take a different form, with any deal linked to lifting the U.S. blockade on Iran's ports. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations unfolding behind closed doors.

Any agreement formalizing Iran's control of the strait would

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INSIDE



CONFIRMATION CLOSE

Senate committee advances nomination of acting Attorney General Todd Blanche.

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FISHING BANS

River, stream closures become routine as record heat warms already low waters across the West. **Business, Page 10**

MUNCHING ON BRUNCH

Food writer Rekaya Gibson checks out a new Virginia Beach restaurant in the former Citrus location. **Flavor**



People walk in the floodwaters as a car stalls on the side of Llewellyn Avenue in the Park Place area of Norfolk after thunderstorms dropped heavy rain Tuesday. **KENDALL WARNER/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT**

Rain reigns in Hampton Roads

STAFF REPORT

Several areas of Norfolk were under flood waters Tuesday afternoon as heavy rains pounded the region.

In Ghent, many cars had stalled or flooded out on city streets after up to 3 inches of rain had fallen by about 3:20 p.m. — with another 2 inches possible.

The National Weather Service had issued multiple flash flood warnings for portions of Hampton Roads, creating the potential for rapidly rising water on roads.

They were in place for parts of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach.

The city of Norfolk

announced that two of its underpasses — at Colley Avenue and Monticello Avenue — were closed due to flooding.

Another warning was in effect for central Isle of Wight County and northeastern Suffolk.

The Weather Service said 2-3 inches of rain had already fallen there since 2 p.m.

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WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY H: 90 L: 75
THU. H: 90 L: 75
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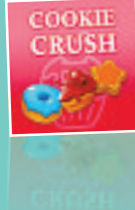
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