

TO BHMA

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The Hunter-Gatherers Joining the Modern World

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Nicholas Bariyo

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

YAEDA VALLEY, Tanzania—In a bygone era, 27-year-old Emmanuel Mussa would likely have been preparing arrows tipped with the poison from the desert rose for a hunt across the forested plains with other Hadzabe tribesmen.

But on a recent morning, the university graduate was dusting the crimson fuel tank of his Chinese-made motorbike before beginning a 5-mile ride to his office in a nearby settlement, where he works as a project manager for a social enterprise selling carbon credits.

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GOP Plays Defense on Senate

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Cameron McWhirter and Lindsay Wise

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio—Former Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown lost his seat in a 2024 MAGA wave that put Republicans back in control of the Senate.

Now, the onetime three-term Ohio senator is seeking a comeback in a very different political environment, with an unpopular war and high prices denting President Trump's poll numbers and alarming Republican strategists.

Standing on a recent weekday with about 30 United Steelworkers union members and supporters outside a closed paper mill, Brown talked all about the economy.

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In April 2013, three Greek foremen in the southwestern town of Manolada opened fire on about 200 Bangladeshi migrants who protested over unpaid wages the previous day. Things, since that time, have not changed.

GEORGIOS MOUDRAS/REUTERS

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The Dark Side of Cultivating Greece's 'Red Gold' Crop

By Antonis Diniakos and Elena Fyntanidou

It's Wednesday, April 17, 2013, in Manolada, a village in the Ilia prefecture of Western Greece. The time is

nearly 6 p.m. Dozens of farm workers from Bangladesh decide to protest, demanding six months of unpaid wages for their labor in the strawberry fields. Supervisors carrying shotguns open fire on the workers. More than 30 people are injured,

eight of them seriously.

The incident makes headlines in Greece and abroad. Four years later, on March 30, 2017, Greece is condemned by the European Court of Human Rights over the case. The court rules that authorities failed to adequately protect the work-

ers and that their working conditions amounted to a form of forced labor.

The Manolada case is no longer a local story. It becomes a landmark reference point, opening a wider discussion about the system operating behind the production of

Greece's "red gold" — strawberries. Thirteen years after the horrific events, living conditions may have changed, but tensions remain. The work is still harsh, insecure, poorly paid and, in many cases, exploitative.

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The band The Tiger Lillies, which are participating in this year's production of «The Bacchae» showing in the Athens Epidaurus Festival.

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Epidaurus Bridges the Patina of the Past With Today's Challenges

By Panos Kougias

This summer, Epidaurus (both the Ancient and Little theaters) seems to circle obsessively around a common theme: humanity 'under siege'. Against an increasingly unsettling international backdrop spanning both the Mediterranean and

the Middle East, the Athens Festival program and the artistic choices of its director, Michail Marmarinos, serve to remind us—sometimes through testimony—of the importance of keeping the faith with human values in times of upheaval.


The Greek National Opera's "Medea" returns as a re-imagining of a legend defined

by Maria Callas; Euripides' "The Bacchae" is interpreted as "Dionysian chaos"; and Alan Lucien's "Antigone" strips the Sophoclean myth bare to bring it face to face with the ethical instability of our present. Meanwhile, at the Little Theater of Epidaurus, two further productions shift the focus from myth to contemporary reality.

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One with the future

The Hunter-Gatherers Weighing Whether to Join the Modern World

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Hadzabe in Tanzania are one of the world's oldest tribespeople, but after years of resistance change is coming

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Mussa also regularly visits the town of Mbulu, 30 miles away, to buy groceries. He lives in an iron-roofed house, tends a small potato garden in his front yard and tracks global events—from the conflicts in the Middle East to European soccer—via his smartphone.

It is a stark illustration of how one of the world's last hunter-gatherer societies is being absorbed into the modern world.

"This isn't how my parents lived," he said, pointing to a group of motorcycle taxi drivers outside a shop in his village. "These days, children go to school, and not everyone depends on hunting and gathering."

Anthropologists believe the Hadzabe—who number fewer than 1,300 people—have roamed the Yaeda Valley in northern Tanzania for more than 50,000 years. They are believed to be the second-oldest people on Earth after the San people of southern Africa. Living in nomadic groups, the men use handmade bows and arrows to hunt Cape buffalo, baboons and the rodent-like hyrax. They climb giant baobab trees to raid beehives for honey. Women forage for fruit and tubers.

For generations, the Hadzabe, also known as the Hadza, have kept their distance from modern agriculture, guns, missionaries, poachers and encroaching pastoralists. They are the only ethnic group in Tanzania allowed to hunt and gather food in protected areas, and local activists have successfully campaigned to secure the Hadzabe the deeds to their lands.

They have clung to their hunting-and-gathering ways longer than most. These days, however, the Hadzabe—who speak a click-based language—are no longer strangers to the rest of the world, and they are divided on how to respond.

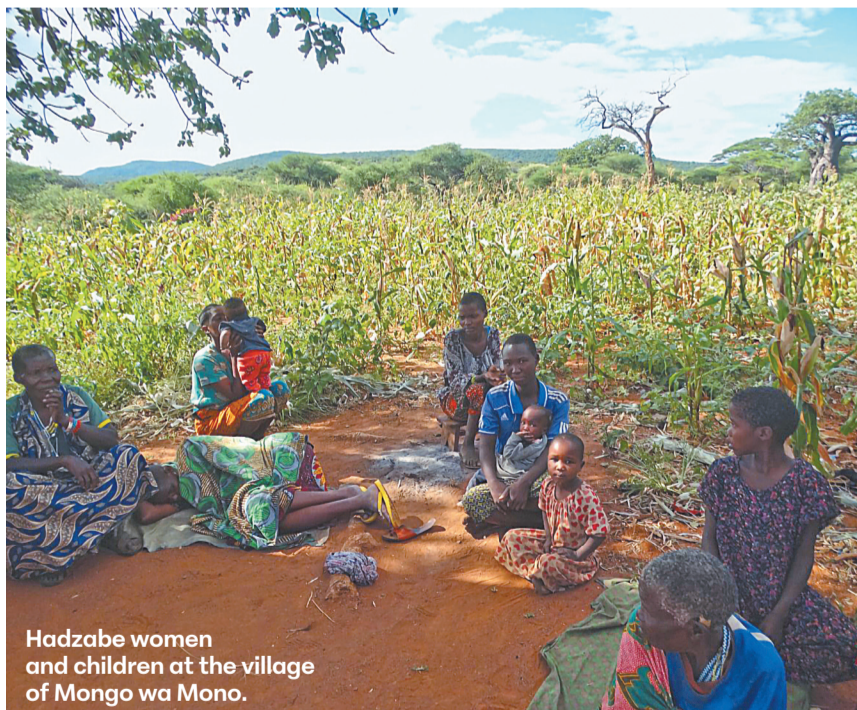
First came the trophy hunters and tourism companies, which disrupted the Hadzabe's traditional hunts. In recent years, revenue from the sale of carbon credits—paid to the community by a local conservation group, Carbon Tanzania, in exchange for tribespeople protecting vast forest areas—has enabled local authori-



A Hadzabe hunter-gatherer in northern Tanzania.



The Hadzabe are one of the world's last hunter-gatherer societies.



Hadzabe women and children at the village of Mongo wa Mono.

ties to build roads, hospitals and schools, accelerating the transition to modern life.

Each year, the tribespeople benefit from over \$560,000 in carbon revenue that pays for forest scouts and funds education, health care and emergency food rations. Every six months, Hadzabe villages meet in the valley to decide how to spend their money.

Mussa was one of the

beneficiaries of the funds set aside to educate Hadzabe children. Orphaned at a young age, he credits his grandmother with encouraging him to enroll in school. After attending a boarding school in the valley, he went to university in the city of Moshi, graduating with a bachelor's degree in environmental science in 2022—the first known university graduate from his village of Domanga.

On a recent evening, he joined two of his uncles for dinner. As the men spoke softly, one of them spun a small shaft on a flat piece of wood, sliding his palms back and forth and made a small fire that quickly built into a flame. There, he laid a pan with beef bought from a grocery store, water and sliced tomatoes.

Around the fire, Mussa takes a dim view of the

tribesmen who insist on the traditional norms. "We shouldn't abandon our culture, but we can't ignore how much the world has changed," he said.

With money in their pockets, many Hadzabe have gradually turned from their migratory way of life, staying in the same settlements for years. Women sell beads to a steady flow of tourists from roadside stalls.

Men, who once thought banknotes were more useful for rolling cigarettes, now visit shops to buy soda and mobile phones. Children attend school and interactions with other ethnic groups are no longer prohibited, as used to be the Hadzabe's custom.

Nyamumba Evelyne's family moved into this settlement of six straw huts more than a decade ago. In recent years, the group—now more than 30 people—has begun planting corn, beans and potatoes during the rainy season. The 48-year-old sells wild honey and beads for cash, which she uses to buy clothes, tobacco and marijuana. Others have found jobs as forest guards.

"This has been our home for a long time. We have no intention of leaving," she said, sitting under the shade of an ancient baobab tree. Its trunk is jammed with short sticks, forming a makeshift ladder that she still climbs each summer to raid beehives. Nearby, the community has erected several artificial beehives to boost honey production, which forms the backbone of the local economy.

In multiple interviews, Hadzabe members described their motivation to modernize as a way to benefit from the new economic opportunities amid shrinking hunting grounds and an influx of outsiders.

Others are ambivalent, recognizing the benefits of change but fearing they might be giving up more than they realize.

On a rock overhang near his settlement, Salim Joseph, a 48-year-old Hadzabe community leader, watches workers pour concrete and install wire panels at a new school below. "We really don't want to lose our identity, but we have no choice," he said.

Still, he said he was pleased that his 5-year-old daughter would soon enroll in the charity-funded complex instead of venturing into the wild to gather fruit and hunt birds. She will be the latest member of his family to transition into the contemporary world—last year, Salim allowed his eldest son to join Tanzania's military, a move once unheard of in Hadzabe culture.

Elsewhere, what used to be roaming bands of Hadzabe men now work as village

forest guards, tasked with patrolling vast scrub forests and acacia bushlands to look out for poachers, land grabbers and illegal loggers. Others have started corn and potato farms, while some earn money through tourism and carbon credit schemes.

“Previously, the Hadzabe were largely isolated from modern life, but not anymore,” said Daudi Peterson, an American who grew up in Tanzania. “The majority are now part of the modern world.”

Today, it is common to hear Swahili spoken in the valley rather than the Hadzabe language. Dozens of Hadzabe children attend schools and universities far from the valley. With bands of men patrolling the 273,000-acre forest, poachers and illegal loggers have stayed away, allowing the grasslands to rejuvenate.

Still, some Hadzabe remain deeply connected to their traditional way of life. Others are concerned by the growing numbers of farmers from outside their ancestral lands who now pretend to be Hadzabe to elicit money from tourists.

On a recent day, Moshi Issa was inspecting a forested hillside in his village of Mongo wa Mono, hoping to shoot a hyrax for dinner, when he spotted an impala in a thicket—a big surprise in a valley where the population of large mammals has been dwindling. Taking cover behind a rock, he drew his bowstring and with a single strike landed an arrow close to its neck. With the help of neighbors, he skinned it, securing enough meat for the entire settlement for several days.

“I still think our ancestors lived better lives. As long as there are animals to hunt and tubers to harvest, what else do I want?” he said. “I still urge my people not to rush into embracing foreign influences.”

The integration process is still in the initial stages and it is too early to tell what will happen to the Hadzabe, yet many in Tanzania already regard it as a success story.

For decades, the government had tried—and failed—to integrate the Hadzabe into the modern world. In the 1980s, officials forced them into villages with permanent, iron-roofed houses, but the Hadzabe fled back to the bush after only a few days. Today, Tanzanian authorities—from the tourism minister to village leaders—have hailed the current transformation as the fulfillment of a longstanding desire to improve the quality of life in this remote region.

“The Hadzabe have chosen to change on their own terms—we are all happy with the progress,” said Diwani Brison, a local council member in Yaeda Valley.

By Hannah Maio
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

FOSHAN, China—At the beginning of this century, China’s rise as the world’s factory floor devastated furniture manufacturers in the foothills of North Carolina, part of a phenomenon known as the “China Shock” that put swaths of Americans out of work.

These days, it is China’s furniture capital, Foshan, that is fighting to survive.

Hit by new tariffs from the Trump administration last year, China’s exports of furniture and related products declined 6.8% in 2025. The economy of Foshan, a factory town in the heart of southern China’s Pearl River Delta, grew just 0.2% last year, dragged down by a contraction in manufacturing, compared with China’s overall 5% growth, according to government data.

Furniture and other low-end, low-margin goods have been easier to move out of China than high-tech products. Manufacturing these goods isn’t easily automated, and labor costs are lower in surrounding countries in Southeast Asia. Beijing has been prioritizing cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors and robotics.

While China is increasingly dominating high-tech industries, the low-value manufacturing sectors that powered the country’s rise are becoming less important economic drivers. In factory towns that make toys, shoes and other cheap goods along China’s coast, many migrant laborers who returned to their rural hometowns for the Lunar New Year holiday in February didn’t come back because they were let go from their jobs or work had gotten harder to come by.

Much like the factories in Hickory, N.C., did in the aftermath of the China Shock, manufacturers in Foshan are now trying to move upmarket, focusing on higher-end furniture and custom designs.

“We have to uplift ourselves,” said Ken Huo, a furniture exporter in Foshan.

For many years, Foshan’s factories could depend on a steady stream of massive orders from big-box American retailers such as Walmart and Home Depot. Then, when President Trump put tariffs on Chinese goods in his first term, Americans began buying less of their furniture from China and more from countries such as Vietnam and Mexico.

Around 2021, China’s real-estate boom turned to bust, drying up domestic demand for furniture. After Trump returned to the White House last year, the U.S. imposed new tariffs on all Chinese goods—briefly exceeding 100%. There is currently a 25% duty on certain furniture from China.

Some Foshan factory



Walmart used to be a major customer of the Julei bed-frame factory in Foshan, China.

The Factory Town Known as China’s Furniture Capital Is Fighting to Survive

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The U.S. lost much of its furniture industry to China years ago. Now, American tariffs and overseas competition are punishing manufacturers.

owners have shifted production to Southeast Asia to avoid tariffs. Others have scrambled to make up for lost U.S. sales with new customers in other regions.

Huo, a Foshan native, has lived through it all. Since 1990, he has sold home goods and furniture to foreign buyers, first working for factories, then starting his own business. A fluent English speaker, he advises local manufacturers on export strategies and is a middleman for overseas sales, including selling products on Wayfair and Amazon.

The past year has been trying. The scale and speed with which Trump imposed tariffs last year surprised Huo and others in the industry. Seemingly overnight, Huo’s U.S. sales, which account for about half of his revenue, declined around 15%. To save money, Huo moved into a smaller office last year inside one of Foshan’s biggest furniture expo centers, Easyhome. He boosted business from other regions to keep revenue steady last year.

Many Chinese furniture manufacturers have struggled to adapt. China’s exports to the U.S. of furniture and re-



lated products fell 18% last year and have continued falling this year. Around Huo’s office, Easyhome resembles a ghost town, with swaths of empty offices and stores across its eight floors.

Challenges keep mounting. The war in Iran has weighed on demand from the Middle East, which had been a quickly growing source of

demand for Chinese furniture. The conflict also threatens to depress the global economy, which could curb orders from regions around the world.

In an industrial park elsewhere in Foshan, Julei, a bed-frame factory operating for 26 years, is trying to adapt to the new reality. Walmart used to be a major customer of Julei’s, but the retailer shifted those

orders to Southeast Asia after tariffs were introduced during Trump’s first term. Last year, Trump raised tariffs on steel and aluminum to 50%, including goods made with those metals, such as Julei’s bed frames. That erased any remaining U.S. sales for the company. Last month, the Trump administration overhauled the tariff to be 25% for finished products made with the metals.

In an attempt to attract more buyers, Julei is rolling out new higher-tech bed frames, including those that can be adjusted electronically. It bought a new automated cutting machine last year to help boost productivity. So far, Julei has avoided large-scale layoffs of its more than 100 factory workers, most of whom are in their 40s and 50s and have worked at the company for decades.

“The boss is pretty compassionate,” said Nicole Luk, a salesperson at Julei.

Julei found new customers in Europe and the Middle East last year, but the war in Iran is creating uncertainty about the outlook this year. At a furniture expo in neighboring Guangzhou in March, there were fewer prospective buyers than previous years, according to Luk, who thought attendance was affected by the war.

“The entire landscape is changing very quickly,” said Luk. “It’s very hard to predict.”

Traditionally, many furniture factories in Foshan have relied on orders from retailers that would then sell the products to consumers. Now, more are attempting to go directly to the end customer to control more of the transactions.

Ciaowei, an outdoor-furniture maker in Foshan, created a studio above the factory floor to take photos of their original-design products to market on social media.

“Who knows what the future holds? Perhaps we really won’t be working in factories anymore, or perhaps Chinese factories will have already moved away. Instead, we’ll be focusing more on branding and design,” said Joe Tang, sales director of Ciaowei, whose father started the factory two decades ago.

Manufacturers are also trying to go upmarket. Foshan’s luxury furniture expo center, called the Louvre, bustled with international buyers on a recent weekday. At the less high-end mall next door, Sunlink Furniture City, sales associates scrolled on their phones with few passersby.

Huo, the industry veteran, said he is focused on using social media to market products directly to customers and securing custom design projects that come with smaller order quantities but higher profit margins. He believes China will remain an important hub for furniture manufacturing, even if other countries gain market share.

“Who can replace China?” he said.



Posters advertise factory space for rent in Foshan.

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13 Years Later, Manolada Still Lives In The Shadows

More than a decade after the 2013 shooting of migrant strawberry pickers in southwest Greece shocked Europe, workers in Greece's fields still endure grueling labor, overcrowded housing and fragile legal protections



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Workers earn just €35 for a seven-hour shift, without breaks. Under the sun, in temperatures reaching 40°C. Inside the greenhouses, beneath layers of plastic, the heat climbs even higher. Humidity and heat become trapped. But the work must be completed on time. No delays are tolerated.

If workers stay longer, they receive €5 per hour. And very often, they have to stay longer. Time pressures are relentless.

The wider Iliia and Achaia region produces nearly all of Greece's domestic strawberry output — as much as 90% — across tens of thousands of acres functioning as one vast system. Every year, more than 100,000 tons of strawberries leave the area for European markets.

"The Manolada case came to light because of the shootings in 2013. Otherwise there would still be silent tolerance," says Theodoros Fouskas, associate professor in the Department of Public Health Policy at the University of West Attica.

As head of a research team at the Sociology Research Unit on International Migration, Health and Integration Policies, he frequently visits the area, documenting living conditions and examining how they affect the quality of life of agricultural workers. His last visit was in the summer of 2024. Speaking to TO VIMA, he describes

the disturbing scenes he encountered.

'A tomb made of plastic and wire'

"The workers live in makeshift structures known as 'shacks,' built from flammable materials — a suffocating environment that traps workers in extreme heat, humidity and unhealthy living conditions. The workers themselves describe them as 'a tomb made of plastic, wire, bamboo and fabric coverings."

"In temperatures that often exceed 45°C, they work continuously inside greenhouses wearing simple masks, without adequate protection from chemicals, while water is scarce or unsafe to drink and food is cooked on portable gas stoves because there is no electricity.

"The surrounding ground is damp from stagnant water caused by leaks and irrigation. Garbage, empty plastic bottles, dead animals and insects are common sights. The absence of basic sanitation infrastructure, drinking water, bathing

'They are the supervisors, known as mastores (handymen). They know the workers, speak their language, arrange who works where and when, and transfer information and needs from one side to the other.'

Nikos Odubitan, second generation migrant and activist

facilities and toilets worsens living conditions, increasing the risks of disease, respiratory problems and injuries.

"Under these extreme conditions, workers frequently report exhaustion, weight loss, respiratory illnesses, musculoskeletal disorders and severe psychological strain."

Recently, however, the images of improvised shelters have diminished to some extent. Panel-built structures have replaced many of them, offering a more stable, though far from permanent, housing solution.

The 'privileged' workers

"In recent surveys, there are people now living in houses too. About ten people in an 80-square-meter apartment. After the tragic events, some farmers took the initiative to build small homes. Of course, those who live there are, in a way, privileged," says Nikos Odubitan, a second-generation migrant and longtime activist on human rights and migration issues through the NGO Generation 2.0 RED.

Earlier this week, TO VIMA visited Manolada to witness firsthand the living and working conditions of migrant workers in the strawberry fields.

The evening before, workers from different countries had gathered in the square of Nea Manolada, a place more associated with migrant labor than perhaps anywhere else in Greece, to celebrate May Day, in an

event organized by the Workers' Union of Northern Iliia and Western Achaia.

Early Monday morning, the same people who had stood in the village square just hours earlier were walking toward the greenhouses.

"Many walk for miles along the national highway to reach the fields, and that's very dangerous. There have been many accidents," Odubitan notes.

Before sunrise

In the fields, work begins before dawn.

The first crates fill early in the morning and move almost immediately to sorting stations, where size, color and texture are judged at a pace that leaves no room for second thoughts. Nearby, packaging lines operate nonstop, boxes are stacked, trucks are loaded and immediately dispatched.

Inside the greenhouses, movement never stops.

Labor there is often organized through intermediaries.

"They are the supervisors, known as 'mastores (handymen)'" Odubitan explains. "They know the workers, speak their language, arrange who works where and when, and transfer information and needs from one side to the other."

The supervisors themselves are not always visible, but their presence is constant.

By midday, the heat in the fields has already intensified. The air is heavy, thick



with the smell of soil and moisture. The plastic coverings absorb the sunlight and spread it over the rows of plants.

Nobody talks much.

Hands move through the leaves, searching for fruit, cutting it carefully and placing it into crates. Every movement is repeated dozens of times per minute. The aisles are narrow and movement restricted.

Short answers

Bent over a row of plants, Abdul Haye straightens brief-

ly, sets his crate aside and wipes his hands on his trousers. He is 58 years old and has worked in the fields for nearly three decades.

"The wage is €35 for seven hours," he says. "There's no break. If we stay longer, it's €5 an hour."

He bends back down almost immediately.

The conversation about working conditions does not last long.

"Things are better now. They pay properly. It's okay," he says curtly.





legal documents,” says Vaseilios Kerasiotis, a lawyer specializing in migration and human rights law who represented the Manolada case before the European Court of Human Rights.

“The agreement allowed for 4,000 workers per year to enter Greece legally, but it stalled due to bureaucratic obstacles. Still, the situation improved somewhat after 2022. Most workers obtained legal documents.

“But once they obtained those documents, many left Manolada for other regions of Greece to work in better conditions, mainly in hospitality and tourism. That created a labor gap because strawberry production is extensive and demanding.

“Instead of covering the shortage through legal recruitment, the needs were met by people arriving from Nepal and through refugee flows from Bangladesh via Libya.”

Kerasiotis fears that if this situation continues, Greece risks returning to an era when the overwhelming majority of workers were undocumented.

“The work has to get done, and under that pressure producers will hire whoever is available. Usually, the available workers are undocumented,” he explains.

A ‘strange balance’

Apostolos Papadopoulos, professor in the Department of Geography at Harokopio University and a specialist in rural geographic and social analysis, shares a similar view.

He conducted the first major study on farm workers in Manolada in 2008.

“Many work officially through labor vouchers, while others do not. Many entered Greece irregularly. It’s a strange balance maintained by the state to meet farmers’ labor needs,” he says.

According to Papadopoulos, beyond the agreement with Bangladesh, Greece has also signed a deal with Egypt allowing 5,000 agricultural workers to enter the country for nine months.

“Fewer than 100 have actually arrived. That shows that even the legal migration system does not function effectively in Greece, unlike in countries such as Spain,” he concludes.

Within this environment, cases of exploitation persist.

In recent years, there have been reports involving workers from Nepal who were found laboring under coercive conditions, without any real ability to leave, burdened by debts to intermediaries and with restricted freedom of movement.

These allegations do not concern the entirety of strawberry production. But they illuminate the limits of a system that continues to operate under immense pressure.

The same phrase, with slight variations, is repeated by others around him.

When asked where they live, he gestures silently behind the greenhouses.

“There, in the houses. Panels.”

These are temporary prefabricated structures with metal frames and panel walls — sturdier than the shacks of previous years, but cramped and equipped with only basic infrastructure.

“Eight people in each room,” he clarifies.

The rooms are narrow, with bunk beds stacked on top of each other, a few personal belongings piled into corners, a shared space that offers little privacy. Daily life unfolds within these few square meters, with the rhythms of work continuing even after workers leave the fields.

A life split between two countries

At another farm several kilometers away, Siraj Maevi pauses briefly from work.

He has been here for 18 years and says he has worked for the same employer the entire time. The farmer cultivates around 500 acres of strawberries spread across different parts of the region, requiring hundreds of laborers to operate.

“It’s better now,” he says. “We have a bathroom, we have a kitchen. Not like before.”

Sharing a small room with eight people remains standard, but he sees it as an improvement compared to earlier years.

His family, including two children, remains in Bangladesh.

“I send money every month,” he says.

He returns once a year for a few weeks — “two

months, if I can” — before coming back to the fields.

A life divided between two countries.

‘The village has changed’

Further inside the village, the atmosphere shifts.

On a side street lined with low buildings and small shops facing the main road, 59-year-old Faruk Bepari sits in a small courtyard filled with pigeons.

He has lived in Greece for 38 years. He arrived from Dhaka in 1989, initially planning to continue on to Italy. He never left.

“Back then, we didn’t know Greece,” he says. “We thought it was just a stopover.”

His story mirrors that of many others. He started in the fields, moved through day labor and odd jobs, until eventually opening his own shop.

For years, Bepari has acted as a reference point for the community. He translates, explains procedures and helps migrants navigate systems that remain incomprehensible to many.

“The village has changed,” he says.

Only a few hundred permanent Greek residents remain, while the worker population can reach 10,000 depending on the season.

“In the summer it fills up.

It becomes another place.”

He has also witnessed the darker side of this transformation.

“Some things have improved now,” he says. Wages are increasingly paid through official channels. But the picture is far from uniform.

In a labor system based on constant worker movement and daily-changing demands, invisible labor still exists.

“If you don’t have papers, you can’t do much. That’s what we want to change. We want to be able to work normally,” Bepari says.

The ‘available’ workers

For producers, the need is straightforward: laborers immediately available during periods when delays are unacceptable.

For workers, employment is often fragmented

‘The work has to get done, and under that pressure producers will hire whoever is available. Usually, the available workers are undocumented’

Vaseilios Kerasiotis, migration and human rights lawyer

- 1. Strawberries in the hands of Bangladeshi workers in Nea Manolada, Iliia. There are more than 4,500 migrants who work mainly in the fields.
- 2. The going daily rate is reportedly 35 euros for seven hours of work, 5 euros an hour for overtime.
- 3. Living conditions are improved, but still lack privacy with seven people sharing one small living space with panel walls.

and unstable. Teams change, fields rotate and the pace is dictated by production demands.

Within this environment, labor remains flexible, and fragile.

Those without full legal documentation are in the weakest position. They depend more heavily on the networks that connect them to jobs, have limited bargaining power and fewer options for resistance.

“Until 2022, when the bilateral agreement between Greece and Bangladesh for migrant legalization was signed, 90% of the people working in strawberry cultivation had no



Warning Signs Cloud Greece's Tourism Season

Greece entered 2026 expecting another record year for tourism, but rising fuel costs, Middle East tensions and decreased demand are beginning to test the industry's resilience

By Kostas Delezos

This year's tourism season began with all the makings of another record-breaker. But suddenly, the international environment changed.

Although Greece is not facing mass cancellations, the first signs of slowing demand are already visible. Greece still has major advantages: a strong brand name, high visibility, improved infrastructure and a reputation as a safe destination. Yet 2026 is not shaping up to be an "easy" year. On the contrary, it may become a period that reveals both the limits and the strengths of the Greek tourism model in a global environment changing at speed.

In this context, the country is being called to balance the strong momentum it recorded in previous years with the need to adapt to an international environment that is becoming increasingly unstable and less predictable.

The new crisis has already begun affecting the cost of travel. Rising fuel prices are increasing airlines' operating

costs, while changes to flight routes because of geopolitical restrictions are further adding to travel times and expenses.

As a result, many travelers appear more cautious about finalizing their bookings. Market insiders note that demand has become more volatile, with sharper fluctuations and less visibility for the months ahead.

Long-haul markets appear especially vulnerable. Travelers from outside Europe tend to reconsider their plans more easily when geopolitical uncertainty rises or when the total cost of a trip increases noticeably.

Even so, the picture is not dramatic for now. The high volume of early bookings made before the crisis began is acting as an important cushion for this season. At the same time, expanded contracts with tour operators had, until recently, confirmed that international demand for Greek destinations remained strong.

Pressure on star destinations

Although the market overall

continues to show resilience, several popular destinations are already recording the first effects of the slowdown.

In the Dodecanese, market sources say the initially strong upward trend in bookings began to weaken after the crisis in the Middle East broke out. The shift is reflected both in online bookings and in a decline in related searches.

A similar picture is emerging in Crete, Greece's largest summer destination. There, tourism businesses are

reporting a "freeze" in searches, while the trend toward last-minute bookings close to arrival dates is becoming noticeably stronger.

In the Cyclades and the Ionian islands, the situation currently appears more stable, with no major deviations in demand. Concern nevertheless remains high, as rising travel costs and uncertainty over international developments are affecting trip planning.

In Athens, the picture remains positive. The Greek capital has been recording increased tourist traffic since the first months of the year, continuing the momentum built in the previous period.

At the international market level, the first pressures are coming from four key countries: the United States, Israel, Australia and India. The sharpest negative shift is from Israel, where scheduled airline seats are down 46%. This is a particularly significant development, as the Israeli market had become one of the fastest-growing sources of visitors for Greek tourism in recent years.

There is also a decline from the U.S. market, although for now it remains limited to 3.3%. The Australian and Indian markets are mainly affected by the objective difficulties of long-haul travel during periods of increased uncertainty and high transport costs.

These developments highlight one of the main challenges for Greek tourism: its heavy dependence on international air connectivity

and the stability of the global environment.

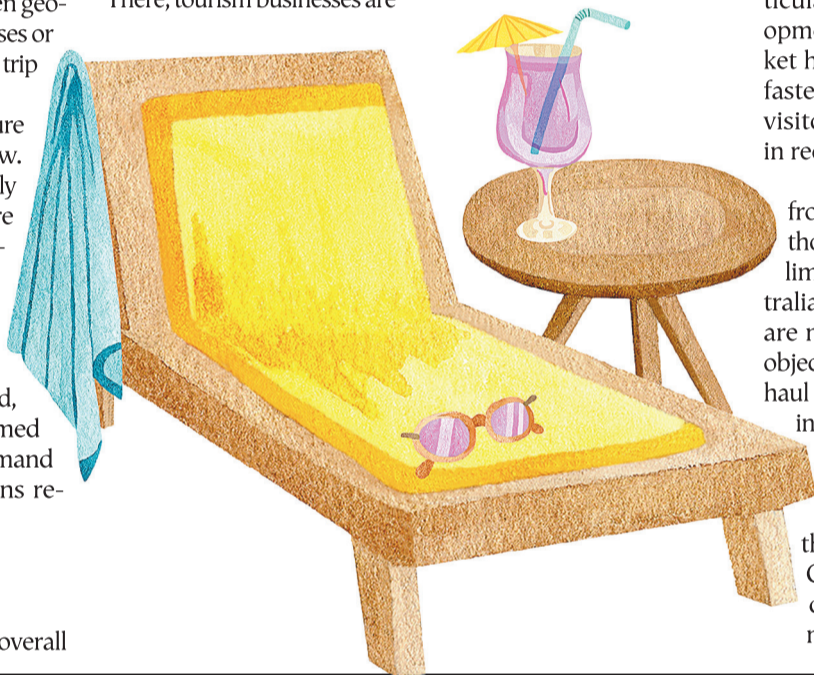
Redistribution

This year's tourism season now appears to be forming around two main scenarios.

The first, and more negative, scenario is that a prolonged period of geopolitical tension will affect overall demand for travel to the Mediterranean. In that case, rising transport costs and broader uncertainty could weaken appetite for travel, especially from high-cost and long-haul markets.

The second scenario is more complex but potentially favorable for Greece. According to this view, travelers will not necessarily cancel their plans, but will instead turn toward destinations they consider safer. In such an environment, pressure on competing destinations in the Eastern Mediterranean could lead to a redistribution of demand in Greece's favor.

Market professionals stress that Greece's image as a safe destination remains a strong comparative advantage, especially in periods of international uncertainty.



The Goeconomic Imperative: When Geopolitics Meets Credit Risk

Why is access to credit tightening even as central banks ease monetary policy? The answer lies not in balance sheets, but on geopolitical maps

European borders face a paradox that traditional financial analysis cannot solve: Why is access to credit tightening even as central banks ease monetary policy? The answer lies not in balance sheets, but on geopolitical maps.

The European Central Bank's Bank Lending Survey reveals a striking divergence. From 2023 to 2025, euro area banks have progressively tightened credit standards for corporate loans, even during periods of interest rate cuts. Banks increasingly point to factors beyond conventional financial metrics: geopolitical tensions, energy market volatility, supply chain fragility, and regional instability. According to the ECB's recent survey, banks explicitly cite geopolitical developments as a driver of tighter credit standards - meaning geopolitics is now being priced directly into lending decisions.

This represents a fundamental recalibration of creditworthiness assessment, with profound governance implications.

The regulatory response

European banking regulators have moved decisively to formalize what markets were already pricing in. The ECB's supervisory framework now explicitly requires banks to embed geopolitical risk assessment into capital planning, liquidity management, and risk governance with the same rigor reserved for credit or operational risk.

This means stress testing for scenarios that once seemed remote: sudden trade restrictions, energy supply disruptions, sanctions-induced payment fragmentation, and supply chain corridor closures. Bank boards must demonstrate they understand which geopolitical scenarios could materially impair their capital position.

By Cleopatra Kitt



Banks that have strengthened their geopolitical risk frameworks are seeing reduced supervisory measures, while those treating this as a compliance exercise face intensified scrutiny.

The corporate governance blind spot

Yet the more significant governance gap may exist outside banking. Corporate boards, particularly at mid-sized enterprises, have largely failed to recognize that their creditworthiness is now evaluated through an entirely different lens.

Consider a well-managed European manufacturer: strong margins, experienced management, solid market position. But 35% of revenues come from politically contested markets, components are sourced through geopolitically sensitive corridors, and energy represents significant volatile cost exposure.

Five years ago, this represented successful diversification. Today, it triggers risk flags across multiple stress scenarios in a bank's internal capital assessment. Financial performance may be excellent, but geopolitical exposure now weighs as heavily in credit decisions as leverage ratios.

From risk to strategic opportunity

This creates an opportunity for proactive corporate boards.

First, map your geopolitical exposure through

your lender's analytical lens: revenue concentrations by political risk profile, supply chain dependencies on sensitive routes, input cost exposures to volatile markets, and customer concentrations facing sanctions risk.

Second, engage lenders before refinancing pressures emerge. Board oversight of treasury strategy must include explicit discussion of how your geopolitical footprint is perceived by capital providers.

Third, elevate supply chain resilience to board-level oversight. This directly affects your cost of capital and strategic flexibility.

A governance reset

The direction is clear. Geopolitical risk assessment will soon be as standard in European boardrooms as cyber risk governance is today. The only question is whether boards build this

capability proactively or adopt it under pressure.

The goeconomic shift has restructured credit relationships across Europe. Monetary policy matters less when political risk dominates underwriting. Corporate strategy matters less when geopolitical exposure determines capital access.

Boards that recognize this as a strategic governance opportunity rather than a compliance burden will find themselves materially better positioned for what comes next. The world has changed. The question for every board is whether governance frameworks have evolved dynamically to protect and grow value.

Cleopatra Kitt is an IN-SEAD-certified independent director specializing in geoeconomics, corporate governance, and sustainable finance and a Senior Policy Advisor, ELIAMEP.

Alan Lucien Øyen

ANTIGONH

Εμπνευσμένο από το έργο του Σοφοκλή

7 & 8 ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΥ
ΑΡΧΑΙΟ ΘΕΑΤΡΟ ΕΠΙΔΑΥΡΟΥ

ATHENS
EPIDAUROS
FESTIVAL

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΘΕΑΤΡΟ



Jacques Lacombe
Παναγής Παγουλάτος

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ

Κερουμπίνι

20 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ
ΑΡΧΑΙΟ ΘΕΑΤΡΟ ΕΠΙΔΑΥΡΟΥ

ATHENS
EPIDAUROS
FESTIVAL

ΟΠΕΡΑ



Epidaurus Bridges the Patina of the Past With Today's Challenges

By Panos Kougias

Marta Górnicka's "Mothers – A Song for Wartime"

brings together a chorus of women from different war zones, while Ivan Vyrpaev's "I-ONE", directed by Galin Stoev, transports tragedy into a dystopian future where identity and memory are subject to technological erasure.

Epidaurus, Medea and the revival of the legend of Maria Callas
Greek National Opera
– 20 June 2026
Ancient Theater of Epidaurus

The Greek National Opera returns to Epidaurus with Luigi Cherubini's "Medea" for a single performance on 20 June 2026. It is a return imbued with a powerful historic charge, given that this year's staging engages directly with the iconic 1961 production starring **Maria Callas** in the title role.

Sixty-five years on, the Greek National Opera has set out to transcend mere revival to re-create that historic moment, drawing on material from Alexis Minotis's stage directions, the designs of **Yannis Tsarouchis**, and the photographic archive of the performances that immortalized Callas's bond with Epidaurus. Here, the past functions not as memory, but as material that can be put to work dramaturgically.

This new staging contributes to the thematic focus of the Greek National Opera's 2025/26 season, which explores the concept of "the opera of the future through the matrix of the past". Following the closure of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus for restoration work, the Greek National Opera will continue its summer program at the Ancient Theater of Epidaurus, bringing opera back to the venue for the first time in decades.

The music is conducted by Jacques Lacombe, while the direction is handled by **Panaghis Pagoulatos**. Sets by Lili Pezanou, costumes by Tota Pritsa and lighting by Christos Tziogas combine in this new interpretation of a historic production, which engages closely with the available historical records and archival documents. Anna Pirozzi appears in the role of Medea alongside Jean-François Borrás as Jason, Tassis Christoyannis as Creon, Alisa Kolo-sova as Neris, and Danae Kontora as Glauke, with the participation of the Greek National Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

This year's Medea at Epidaurus seems to be aiming less at a 'glorious revival' and more at exploring what it means to restage a production that already enjoys legendary status in the pantheon of Greek culture.

Provocative Bacchae & an Epidaurus in Dionysian ecstasy
Ivan Vazov National Theater of Bulgaria – Javor Gardev
Featuring The Tiger Lillies

Euripides' "The Bacchae" is presented at the Ancient Theater of Epidaurus, directed by Javor Gardev in a co-production between the Ivan Vazov National Theater of Bulgaria and the Athens Epidaurus Festival, in collaboration with the National Theater of Northern Greece.

The production attempts a contemporary, almost **disruptive** interpretation of Euripides' tragedy, centering on the timeless conflict between Apollo and Dionysus. In one of his most characteristic—almost Nietzschean—statements, the

Galina Stoev
I-ONE
του Ιβάν Βιριπάεφ

7 & 8 ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΥ
ΜΙΚΡΟ ΘΕΑΤΡΟ
ΑΡΧΑΙΑΣ ΕΠΙΔΑΥΡΟΥ

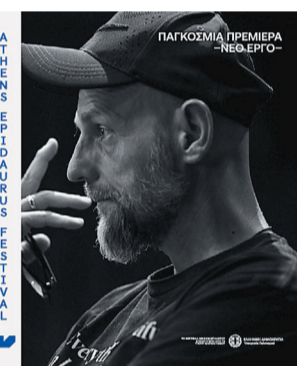
director returns to the age-old question: "Can Dionysus prevail completely over Apollo, even only within the confines of the stage?" Gardev's direction addresses the ancient text as a test of the limits of order—of that point where Dionysian frenzy becomes a fracture in the very fabric of civilization. This Bacchae for our times asks questions about how societies deal with the repressed and the unpredictable, but also how the fear of order's end manifests itself as a deep-seated collective anxiety that perpetually re-surfaces in new forms.

The production's musical identity is wrought and performed live on stage by **The Tiger Lillies**, the cult British trio, who bring their customary dark aesthetic to the stage like a troupe of Dionysian **troubadours**.

A hybrid Antigone: contemporary and raw
Alan Lucien Øyen – Greek Premiere
7 & 8 August

Norwegian creator **Alan Lucien Øyen** makes his Greek debut with a different interpretation of "Antigone" in which he attempts a deconstruction of the myth's dramatic essence—to strip away every unnecessary "layer of artifice", as he puts it.

This is a **complex** pro-



duction in which dance is combined with the spoken word and theatrical narrative. Using a theatrical idiom that verges on the abstract, the production re-examines the weight of **responsibility** before the law and one's conscience. Øyen crafts a work that eschews didacticism and simplistic interpretations, opting instead for a more existential and physical approach to tragedy.

At the heart of the project is **winter guests**, the artistic collective founded by Øyen: a hybrid ensemble that unites dancers, actors, writers and designers together into a single dramaturgical unit. The production also features key collaborators from Tanztheater Wuppertal, carrying forward the creative legacy of Pina Bausch. Notably, Øyen was among the first choreographers commissioned to create a new work for the company following Bausch's death.

A women's choir sings to exorcise the horrors of war
Marta Górnicka
Little Epidaurus
– 4 July

At the Little Epidaurus Theater, "Mothers – A Song for Wartime" by **Marta Górnicka** shifts among musical theater,

choral performance and collective testimony against the backdrop of contemporary **war** and the traces it leaves on the female body and voice.

The performance is built around a **polyphonic** ensemble of 21 women from Ukraine, Belarus and Poland, ranging in age from 9 to 71. Mothers and daughters, refugees and survivors form a unique choir that serves as a beacon for the **preservation** of collective memory. Among them are women from places such as Mariupol, Kyiv, Irpin and Kharkiv, bringing their lived experience of displacement, loss and survival to the stage.

Marta Górnicka, founder of the **CHORUS OF WOMEN** in Warsaw and the **Political Voice Institute** in Berlin, organizes a collective on-stage body in which the voice becomes both a political act and a means of survival. The piece begins with a *shchedrivka*, a traditional Ukrainian song of blessing, and evolves into a dense soundscape of folk songs, lullabies, nursery rhymes, incantations and political slogans. At the core of the performance is the idea that war, over and above the absolute and multi-layered destruction it wreaks, also inflicts a radical 'fracture' on language itself.

The production takes on an extra dimension in the intimate setting of Little Epidaurus, as the theater's ancient acoustics and ritualistic proximity amplify its choral essence. "Mothers – A Song for Wartime" seeks to confront war in the present tense, utilizing the choir to articulate—and perhaps exorcise—the inexpressible.

What if they could erase our consciousness one day? The modern world as a variable at the dawn of the technological age
Galina Stoev
Little Theater of Ancient Epidaurus
– 7 & 8 August

The Little Theater of Ancient Epidaurus hosts the world premiere of **Ivan Viripaev's "I-ONE"**, directed by **Galina Stoev**—a creator with a steady presence in contemporary European theater and a distinctive focus on the dramaturgical deconstruction of classical forms.

Viripaev's **futuristic** text, written in English, is positioned from the outset within an international dramatic context. Drawing on the form of ancient tragedy, it transposes it into a contemporary, technological setting. The story is set in a dystopian United States in the year 2050, where the protagonist, Judith, is confronted by a crime that shatters her personal identity: the murder of her stepson and his nanny, who was also her husband's lover. This act triggers a chain of consequences that shift the narrative from the realm of ethics into the sphere of technological intervention. Judith undergoes an experimental 'conversion therapy' via the I-ONE neural implant, which is designed to reshape criminal behavior. However, a technical glitch erases her memory and consciousness, leaving her without a stable sense of identity.

Galina Stoev's direction treats technology as a mirror of the human condition. The work reframes the questions from "what happened" to "who is it who remembers or no longer remembers", placing the instability of identity at its epicenter. The production is a **global on-stage encounter** featuring three actresses from different nations: Sofia Kokkali from Greece, Karolina Rzepa from Poland and Antigone Duchesne from Australia.

In Bid to Flip Senate, Democrats Push Deep Into Trump Territory

In Ohio, former Sen. Sherrod Brown leans on economic message in comeback bid

Continued from Page One

The professorial Brown, 73 years old, blasted his opponent, Republican Sen. Jon Husted, 58, who was appointed when JD Vance became vice president.

"He's been on the side of billionaires, not on the side of steelworkers...or people that are struggling in this neighborhood," Brown said.

Republicans are playing defense in Ohio and a growing number of other red states, where Democrats are counting on voter backlash to power them to victory this fall in their long-shot battle to retake the Senate.

Brown gave similar stump speeches in 2024, when he lost to Republican Bernie Moreno, a staunch Trump ally, by about 3.5 percentage points. But uncertainty about the economy, gas prices, the Iran war and other issues since have frustrated the electorate.

Husted, the former Ohio lieutenant governor, brushed off the idea that Trump's sinking approval ratings could drag him down. Recent polls show Husted holding a slight lead.

"I'm not talking about President Trump, in the sense that he's not on the ballot," Husted said. At the same time, he said that if Trump was on the ballot, it would make his election easier: "He's won Ohio three times."

GOP starts from strong position

Republicans began this election cycle favored to keep the Senate: Democrats would need to defend all their seats and then notch wins in solidly Trump states to take the majority. Republicans were far more worried about losing the House, where dozens of seats are in play.

But the states that Democrats see as truly competitive have gradually expanded beyond North Carolina, which Trump won narrowly in 2024, and Maine, where he lost. More states once considered solidly Republican are in the mix, including Alaska, Iowa, Texas and Ohio. GOP hopes for flipping a Democratic seat in Georgia have faded, although Republicans think they have a chance to pick up a seat in Michigan.



Democrat Sherrod Brown is slightly behind in the polls as he tries to recapture his U.S. Senate seat representing Ohio.

Ohio Republicans are worried about voters like Jerry Gray, who worked at the paper mill in Chillicothe for more than 35 years before the plant closed down recently. He was leaning on a friend's car in the credit union parking lot near the spot where Brown spoke. Gray voted for Trump and Moreno in 2024. Ross County, which includes Chillicothe, voted 69% for Trump and 62% for Moreno.

Gray, 64, a self-described "common Joe," said he has paid well over \$5 for a gallon of gas since the Iran war started. He voted for Trump and Moreno in 2024 because he liked Trump's boss-like, get-it-done attitude.

These days, Gray is dour about the economy and Iran. Asked how he planned to vote, he

shrugged. He liked Brown for helping with contract negotiations at the plant in the past, but he wasn't sure who he would back.

"Let's see what hap-

pens with the war," he said.

Husted said he wants the war to end soon, though he has declined to back Democratic-led efforts to stop military operations.

He knows voters are worried about rising prices, "and they should be." But he blames policies Brown backed for inflation, not the war, or Trump's tariffs.

"All of these policies that stink, that are driving up prices, are his policies—on healthcare and energy," Husted said.

Ohio is expected to be one of the most expensive Senate contests in the country. A super political-action committee affiliated with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) recently announced an initial \$40 million television-ad reservation to support Brown. That follows a \$79 million investment in Ohio last month by a super PAC tied to Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R., S.D.).

Husted is one of many Republican candidates who will be challenged to turn

out Trump's coalition when the president isn't running but also risk backlash from "independent voters who are mad at the president," said Nathan Gonzales, editor and publisher of the nonpartisan newsletter Inside Elections.

Inside Elections recently shifted Ohio in Democrats' direction, from "lean Republican" to "tilt Republican." The newsletter also moved two deep-red states, Nebraska and South Carolina, from "solid Republican" to "likely Republican."

Moreno, who unseated Brown in 2024, rejected the idea that Democrats can win Ohio, much less the Senate majority. He acknowledged angst about gas prices, but predicted the war would be over soon.

"There's way too much hand-wringing today," Moreno said. "I think when the polls close in November, you're going to see us pick up seats."

Economic scars in Chillicothe

In Chillicothe, signs of economic difficulty are readily apparent, from prices at the pump to empty storefronts.

The town's paper mill, an enormous complex with a smokestack south of downtown, is mostly closed, with weeds growing through asphalt and dumpsters filled with debris. Ohio's Republican leaders tried to save the plant, and a smaller operation has opened on the site to make medical gloves, employing fewer people.

The county's most recent unemployment rate was 6.2% in February, while Ohio's was 4.2%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Gloria Dailey, 61, and Scott Dailey, 65, live on a street near the closed plant. The couple are Democrats and came to hear Brown, whom they both support.

They live on what they describe as "a Trump street," and in 2024, many of their neighbors flew Trump flags at their homes. Now the flags are gone, the couple said.

"These were people who would bring up a conversation about Trump and assume that you're agreeing with them," Gloria Dailey said. "They don't do that anymore. They talk about other things."



An American flag at a closed storefront in Chillicothe, Ohio.

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