



THE BODY of mayoral candidate Bertha Gisela Gaytán lies on a street in Celaya, Mexico, on April 1 after she was shot at a campaign rally.

Political killings surge in Mexico

At least 30 candidates have been slain before Sunday’s elections. Analysts blame cartels seeking to rule towns.

By Patrick J. McDonnell

MEXICO CITY — Noé Ramos was chatting with voters, sharing breakfast with supporters of his mayoral reelection bid in his hometown in northern Mexico.

“It’s something very special that people give me a glass of water, that they invite me to have a taco, to have a tamale,” Ramos said in a Facebook livestream last month featuring him at an outdoor table in El Mante in Tamaulipas state. “It motivates me to keep on working to make things better. ... I will not defraud them.”

An hour later, Ramos was dead. An attacker approached him on the campaign trail and stabbed him multiple times.

The same day, April 19, a mayoral candidate in the southern state of Oaxaca was found dead, two days after he was reported missing.

The slayings of at least 30 candidates have provided a chilling backdrop to Mexico’s elections on Sunday, as criminal gangs seek expanded control in states where cartels already wreak havoc. The country’s largest vote ever, with more than 20,000 posts up for grabs and a marquee contest that will almost certainly see Mexico choose its first female president, has led to one of the bloodiest election cycles of recent times — and one in which voters say they are most worried about public safety.

The slayings this cycle, documented by human rights groups and others, haven’t reached the four dozen killings of candidates before the 2018 election, but the Mexican consulting firm Integrallia has declared the current campaign season [See Mexico, A4]

Arizona tests politics of abortion

Could a ballot initiative aimed at securing rights in the swing state draw out reluctant voters in support of Biden? He’s depending on it.

MARK Z. BARABAK
REPORTING FROM TEMPE, ARIZ.

On a recent sunny morning, Riley Heesch stopped outside a coffee shop and signed her name to a petition aimed at putting the abortion issue on Arizona’s November ballot.

She was glad to do so. “I am really passionate about abortion access,” Heesch said. “It is, especially in Arizona, something

that’s being threatened, and it shouldn’t be. It needs to be available to everyone and anyone that needs it.”

But her passion fizzled when it came to the presidential race. The 22-year-old childcare worker, who just graduated from Arizona State University in Tempe, has paid little mind to the contest. And while she definitely won’t back Donald Trump, she’s not at all certain she’ll support Joe Biden, as she did in 2020. She couldn’t say why. “Maybe he’s not the best candidate?” Heesch ventured, before tepidly pledging a maybe-vote for

the president. “I will if I have to,” she said. “I think.”

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As Biden battles for a second term, he’s counting on reluctant voters like Heesch to eventually come around — and on ballot measures like the abortion rights initiative in Arizona to help prod them in his direction. Ever since the Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade, and with it a 50-year-old constitutional right to [See Barabak, A6]



Photo illustration by PABLO DELCAN For The Times

Mom hid in L.A. after killing son, police say

Woman charged in slaying of boy whose body was found in a suitcase in Indiana in 2022.

By Summer Lin

At first, the woman didn’t think too much of the thumping coming from a nearby unit in her North Hollywood apartment building one night in March. She assumed it was a signal from her neighbor that she was being

too loud. But that didn’t make sense, she realized. The volume on her TV wasn’t up that high. She wasn’t walking around the apartment in heels or running noisy appliances, either. The woman, who declined to be named because she feared for her safety, said her neighbor was using what appeared to be a broom to repeatedly smash the walls and ceiling. She also heard high-pitched chanting, as if someone were trying to summon something. It seemed like her neighbor was hav-

ing a mental health crisis, but she didn’t call the police because she worried that would make matters worse. Little did she know that police would have been very interested in the neighbor, Dejaune Anderson. That’s because Indiana authorities had been searching for Anderson for two years, ever since her 5-year-old son’s body was found in a suitcase in the woods. Soon after the incident with the neighbor, police arrested Anderson at a train station in Arcadia. She is now awaiting trial in Indiana [See Slaying, A9]

Study tallies the toll of gas stoves

Exposure could contribute to nearly 19,000 early deaths in the U.S. each year, researchers conclude.

By Tony Briscoe

Lung-irritating pollution created by cooking with gas stoves may be contributing to tens of thousands of premature deaths and cases of childhood asthma in the United States, according to a new study published in the Journal Science Advances.

For decades, scientists have known the flames from a gas stovetop produce nitrogen dioxide, a pungent gas that can inflame a person’s lungs when inhaled. But for the first time, a team of researchers from Stanford University and Oakland-based research institute PSE Healthy Energy have published a nationwide estimate of the long-term health consequences associated with cooking with natural gas and propane stoves.

Researchers ran tests in apartments and single- and multistory houses in Los Angeles, Bakersfield, the Bay Area and elsewhere, and concluded that exposure to nitrogen dioxide emissions alone may contribute to nearly 19,000 premature deaths in the United States each year. It has also resulted in as many as 200,000 current cases of pediatric asthma compared with cooking with electric stoves, which do not produce nitrogen dioxide.

Stanford researcher Yan-nai Kashtan noted higher levels of pollution were correlated with the amount of gas that was burned. But pollution also accumulated at higher levels inside smaller homes. “If you live in a smaller house, you’re exposed to more pollution, and that can lead to income and racial disparities in exposure,” Kashtan said. “In general, folks living in neighborhoods [See Gas, A6]

Even if Trump loses, he wins

Former president will react with defiance and denial over verdict, Doyle McManus says. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

Investigation of rapper heats up

Prosecutors are preparing subpoenas in probe of Sean “Diddy” Combs, a source says. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Much nail-biting over loan-outs

Hollywood unions seek answers amid an apparent crackdown on a long-standing industry practice. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather Partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 76/57. **B6**

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