

‘I created one of the greatest economies in the history of our country. I’ll do it again.’  
FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

‘Donald Trump has no plan for you because he’s more interested in defending himself than looking out for you.’  
VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS

## Harris and Trump battle for an edge

Unlike Biden, vice president stays on the offensive as ex-president delivers his trademark rants



SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The two candidates, who had never met before, clashed repeatedly in the debate Tuesday night in Philadelphia.

By Sam Brodey  
GLOBE STAFF

PHILADELPHIA — Within the first five minutes of the presidential debate between President Biden and former president Donald Trump in June, the trajectory of the race completely changed.

Within the first 40 minutes of Tuesday’s debate, Trump had accused Democrats of supporting the execution of infants, Haitian immigrants of eating pets, and Vice President Kamala Harris of contributing to his assassination attempt.

The second presidential debate may not have completely up-ended the race in the way the first did, but it generated a number of memorable moments and sound bites, setting the course of this reshaped contest and solidifying what a bitter, ugly, and hard-fought stretch it will be.

There were, at times, moments of relatively substantive policy discussion on issues relating to the economy and foreign policy. In the early minutes, Harris talked up her plan for the middle class, while Trump defended his use of tariffs during his administration.

But it may have been Harris’s tactic to bait Trump that defined this debate. The vice president proved adept at getting under the former president’s skin in a way that perhaps none of his adversaries have before.

Facing a question on immigration, for instance, Harris worked in a dig that Trump could not resist, claiming that people leave his rallies early due

► **Fact check, A6.**

**DEBATE, Page A7**

## Read backers find another cause in case of Birchmore

Suspicious focused on investigators’ actions

By Nick Stoico and Danny McDonald  
GLOBE STAFF

Melissa Berry was surprised that the death of a 23-year-old pregnant woman who was allegedly groomed and sexually assaulted as a child by a Stoughton police officer had not received broader attention.

In early 2023, the 50-year-old content creator, who lives north of Boston, launched a public Facebook group focused on Sandra Birchmore’s death and suspicions Berry and others harbored that the Canton woman did not take her own life as local authorities had concluded. “Justice for Sandra Birchmore,” she called it, but it drew little engagement.

That began to change early this year, in the buildup to the Karen Read trial. To hear Berry tell it, the spotlight on Read, who was charged with killing her boyfriend, Boston police officer John O’Keefe, fed directly into intense scrutiny of Birchmore’s death in 2021.

Both cases have sparked outrage over the perceived shortcomings of investigators, with critics saying that local authorities did not take the time to properly gather and review evidence. In the Read case, much of the indignation has focused on law enforcement charging Read with her boyfriend’s slaying, and questions about whether evidence, such as blood samples, was handled appropriately. In Birchmore’s case, much of the rage is grounded in law enforcement’s initially ruling the death a suicide and failing for years to bring homicide charges.

The cases are both rooted in neighboring suburbs southwest of Boston: Canton and Stoughton. And with the Read case at a lull following a mistrial in July, some of her supporters are turning their attention to Birchmore’s case, especially after a federal indictment last month accused former Stoughton police detective Matthew Farwell of strangling Birchmore and staging the crime scene to look like a suicide.

“The more that Karen Read’s case got out

**BIRCHMORE, Page A10**

## Some Gaza residents send gunmen away from shelters

Trying to avoid airstrikes as Israel targets Hamas

By Bilal Shbair and Matthew Mpoke Bigg  
NEW YORK TIMES

When the war forced Nasser al-Zaanin to flee his home in the northern Gaza Strip in October, he, along with his adult sons and grandchildren, moved to a school that had

been turned into a shelter.

There, at the Abdul Kareem al-Aklouk school in the town of Deir al-Balah, he helped set up a system of committees to improve life for families who had taken refuge. The committees oversaw food, water, and medical needs, and they had one red line: No armed men were allowed in the compound.

Residents, already forced to evacuate their homes because of Israel’s intense bombardment, wanted to avoid becoming a target for Israeli

forces hunting down Hamas militants. Every few days in recent weeks, Israel has hit a school building turned shelter where it has said militants are hiding, including on Saturday, when it struck two compounds in northern Gaza that it said Hamas was using as a military base.

Early in the conflict, al-Zaanin said, Hamas had wanted to station police officers at the shelter where he was staying. The group said it would ensure security, but he said the residents had gathered to stop that.

“All the families agreed,” said al-Zaanin, 56, who once worked as a civil servant for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza.

“We simply want to save all families, women and children, and not let there be any potential threat against us because of the existence of police and members of the Hamas government,” he said. The police, al-Zaanin added, could stand outside the building but not inside.

Several other residents of school

**GAZA, Page A4**

## Turning off a community

FCC fines force local Haitian pirate radio stations to look online



GLOBE STAFF/ADOBE

By Tiana Woodard  
GLOBE STAFF

The letter from the Federal Communications Commission was dense. As Gerlens Cesar pored over it, attempting to decipher the meticulous details of when the agency first took notice of his unlicensed Haitian Creole-language radio station Radio TeleBoston, he could only focus on one number: \$453,015.

This is what Cesar would have to pay if he continued to operate, the FCC said in the 2019 letter. It was, at the time, the largest fine the federal agency had ever attempted to levy against a pirate radio operation, and was a precursor to how the FCC would soon crack down

on such stations.

“When me and my wife saw it, we were thinking, ‘What’s going to happen to our house?’” said Cesar, a Sharon-based computer engineer, who launched his radio station nearly a decade ago to share current events, boost Haitian voter turnout locally, and teach older people to navigate technology. “If we are unable to pay that fine, then whatever asset we have, we worried they’ll take it away from us.”

Faced with the high penalty, Cesar struck a deal. He paid \$5,000 and agreed to pay \$225,000 if he violated the law again. To remain on the airwaves legally, Cesar

**RADIO, Page A5**

## Report criticizes Brockton

Incompetence — not fraud or theft — led to a huge shortfall in the school budget, it said. **B1.**

**Industry insiders are split on what will happen with the Cannabis Control Commission** after the termination of Shannon O’Brien. **B5.**

**Tired of seeing fresh produce go bad in the fridge after just a few days?** Try these expert tips to get ahead of the problem. **G1.**

**Ever seen the rain?**

**Wednesday:** Perfect, again. High 73-77. Low 57-62.

**Thursday:** And another. Sunrise: 6:20 Sunset: 7:00  
**Weather and Comics, G6-7. Obituaries, C9.**

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