



Merchan faces major choices as trial ends

N.Y. Supreme Court justice has stayed calm amid Trump's tense case

BY TOM JACKMAN

NEW YORK — It's almost time for the judge to instruct the jury. New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan is approaching a critical juncture in Donald Trump's hush money trial, one that has tripped up more than a few judges over the years and provided an avenue for defendants to successfully appeal a conviction: the jury charge.

His instructions, given after closing arguments that could come by Tuesday, will be a critical part of the jury's effort to understand the logic of the prosecution's case — that falsifying business records constituted felony election interference.

In the first criminal trial of a former U.S. president, it is up to Merchan, a judge for 18 years, to decide how to clearly lay out the legal questions the jury must resolve.

Both sides will supply proposed instructions. Some will come from standardized language devised by the New York courts, but others will be specifically worded to define exactly what the jury must find to convict Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee in this year's presidential election.

It will fall to Merchan to adopt a suggestion from either side for each instruction, use a standardized version, or write one himself if necessary.

"Jury instructions do have an outsized impact on a trial," said Renato Mariotti, a defense attorney. **SEE MERCHAN ON A4**

Biden touts Black gains in Atlanta, Detroit

Reserved reactions to Morehouse address; friendlier ones at NAACP

BY CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR. AND HOLLY BAILEY

DETROIT — President Biden pitched himself as a leader who is "breaking down doors" for Black Americans during a closely watched commencement speech on Sunday at Morehouse College and an evening speech in Detroit to try to make inroads with a constituency that has drifted away from him in recent polls.

Before Biden spoke at Morehouse, the biggest question was whether his words would be interrupted by protests, like the ones that have sprung up on college campuses across the country. But instead of a loud rebuke, Biden was met with polite, if measured, applause by the more than 400 graduating seniors and their families, and no major demonstrations.

He focused his speeches on what he sees as his record of improving the lives of Black Americans, stressing that the strides would stop if Donald Trump were elected. **SEE BIDEN ON A5**



PHOTOS BY AN RONG XU FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Life in Taiwan, rowdy and proud

Taiwan lives in the shadow of its much larger, more powerful and aggressive neighbor — one that never hesitates to remind it exactly how much larger and powerful it is.

The threat of China permeates much of political life in this island democracy, and right now it looms large. On Monday, Taiwan inaugurates its fifth democratically elected president, who won the top job in January: Lai Ching-te, the vice president under Tsai Ing-wen.

Chinese leaders in Beijing have long refused to deal with Lai because of his past position on Taiwanese independence: He was once a scrappy advocate for Taiwanese independence, although he is now a key proponent of the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) efforts to maintain peace with Beijing while repelling its aggression.

The Chinese Communist Party in Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory, even though it's never ruled the island, and says it

Vibrant democracy ignores China's threats as it prepares to inaugurate new president

BY AN RONG XU AND LILY KUO
IN TAIPEI, TAIWAN



TOP: A person poses in an elaborate outfit at a gay pride parade in Taipei, the region's largest such event, in October. **ABOVE:** A celebration of Taiwan's National Day on Oct. 10 in front of the presidential palace in Taipei.

will take Taiwan by military force if necessary. It is expected to ramp up intimidation as Lai takes office.

But beyond the geopolitical tensions, a vibrant democratic society of 23 million people has blossomed — a development that irks Beijing beyond measure because it clearly shows that democracy and Chinese culture are in fact highly compatible.

Here in Taiwan, just 100 miles across the sea from China, seemingly competing influences come together. Taipei, the capital, buzzes with an energy both chaotic and orderly as 2.6 million people go about their lives.

It's a cacophony of motorcycles, karaoke, day markets and night markets — life in perpetual motion.

As the day begins, elderly residents perform tai chi in the city's many parks or visit wet markets. At the other end of the day, tourists and young people saunter through shopping districts. **SEE TAIWAN ON A10**

New leadership: President Lai Ching-te has vowed to continue Taiwan's defense and foreign policy of avoiding tensions with China. **A11**

A challenge to the timeline of the first Americans

Parsons Island in Maryland is at the center of one of the most contentious battles in archaeology

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON
IN PARSONS ISLAND, MD.

With the Chesapeake Bay sloshing at his knee-high boots, Darrin Lowery stood back and squinted at a 10-foot-tall bluff rising above a narrow strip of beach. To the untrained eye, this wall of sandy sediment is the unremarkable edge of a modest island southeast of the Bay Bridge.

To Lowery, a coastal geologist, its crumbling layers put the island at the center of one of the most contentious battles in archaeology: when and how humans first made their way into the Americas.

The story of the first Americans has long been a matter of public and scientific fascination, undergirded at times by vicious disagreements. The timeline of when people arrived has shifted earlier in grudging steps over the past century, and scientists today mostly agree people were in the Americas at least 15,000 years ago. **SEE PARSONS ON A18**



MICHAEL ROBINSON CHÁVEZ/THE WASHINGTON POST

Parsons Island in Maryland has yielded exciting but controversial evidence that humans were present more than 20,000 years ago, a time when much of the continent was covered in ice sheets.

Iran's Raisi on missing aircraft

PRESIDENT, OTHER OFFICIALS ON BOARD

Search for helicopter in country's northwest

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE AND SUZAN HAIDAMOUS

A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and other senior officials suffered a "hard landing" in "adverse weather conditions" in the country's mountainous northwest on Sunday, state-run media reported, and search-and-rescue teams worked into the night to find it. The conditions of those on board were not known, authorities said.

"We hope that God the almighty returns the dear president and his colleagues in full health to the arms of the nation," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, said in a somber statement released on state television Sunday night. Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was also believed to be on the helicopter.

Raisi and the Islamic republic were already under intense pressure at home and abroad. In April, Iran launched its first direct attack on Israel, a barrage of missiles and drones, most of them intercepted, that introduced new uncertainty into a decades-long shadow war. Domestically, crushing sanctions have pitched the economy into free fall as security forces double down against dissent, including a violent crackdown on women.

The Iranian people "must be free," Raisi said. **SEE IRAN ON A13**

Divergent roads for Chinese, U.S. cars

Automakers in China are going global as American rivals are retreating

BY DAVID J. LYNCH AND JEANNE WHALEN

American automakers and their Chinese rivals are heading in different directions.

Able to produce far more cars than they can sell in China, Chinese companies such as BYD are entering markets all over the world. Their global expansion comes as major U.S. carmakers — whose once-lucrative China sales are withering — have withdrawn from promising markets such as India, Indonesia and Thailand to focus on their North American base.

As Chinese manufacturers try to sell as many cars as possible to keep their workers employed, their U.S. competitors are betting on making each vehicle sale more valuable by selling consumers software subscriptions for entertainment, hands-free driving and performance upgrades.

The contrasting strategies involve risks for both sides as they approach what some analysts say is a global car market. **SEE AUTOS ON A6**

IN THE NEWS

From protesting to lawmaking Members of Congress explain how past experiences as activists have shaped their approach. **A3**

Meeting in Israel The U.S. national security adviser reaffirmed to senior Israeli officials a need for their government to connect the war in Gaza to a political strategy. **A13**

THE NATION President Biden is facing pressure to pardon ex-Baltimore prosecutor Marilyn Mosby. **A7**
U.S. forces will withdraw from Niger by mid-September, officials announced. **A8**

THE WORLD Undocumented Haitians face a tough crackdown in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. **A9**
Congolese authorities said several foreigners were arrested after a foiled coup attempt. **A14**

THE ECONOMY A Sonos speaker app update is a blueprint for how to inspire loathing among users, Shira Ovide writes. **A15**

THE REGION D.C. Council member Vincent C. Gray received an honorary doctorate from George Washington University. **B1**

D.C. Council member Trayon White Sr. (D) faces two primary challenges in a Ward 8 race animated by intractable issues. **B1**
Nursing home residents sued the Maryland health secretary over alleged violations of the Americans With Disabilities Act. **B1**

STYLE Politico and Axios co-founder Jim VandeHei traces his rise from a D.C. newcomer with impostor syndrome to a media mogul in a new book. **C1**
Billie Eilish's latest album finds the pop star singing in exponentially more exquisite detail, Chris Richards writes. **C1**

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