



Partly sunny 84/68 • Tomorrow: Shower, humid 84/66 C8

Democracy Dies in Darkness

SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2024 • \$5

## ELECTION 2024

### With verdict, a voter choice on knife’s edge sharpens again

BY DAN BALZ

The felony conviction of former president Donald Trump might or might not become a turning point in the 2024 presidential election. But its precedent-breaking outcome has sharpened the competition between him and President Biden to define the stakes and the choices for voters in November.

Almost nothing has been normal about this election, and now, above all, is the sobering reality that one of the two likely major candidates for president will run as a felon convicted on 34 counts by a Manhattan jury. No former president has ever been so judged nor sought the nation’s highest office with such a badge of dishonor.

Nearly as striking is the degree to which the hierarchy of the Republican Party — and presumably tens of millions of ordinary citizens who follow its lead — have rallied behind Trump in questioning and in many cases condemning a judicial system that has been a pillar of American democracy. Measured responses about the jury’s work have been the exception rather than the rule.

Two big questions could define the debate between Trump and Biden from here forward. The first is which candidate poses the bigger threat to the future of the country. The second is which candidate will make the lives of Americans better than they are today. Though related, the first focuses on character and temperament, the second on substance and policy.

For supporters of the incumbent president, the answers to both are simple and straightforward. It is the former president who is the clear danger, someone who vows retribution against his adversaries; would allow a restriction of freedoms, including access to abortion; favors an expansion of executive power that could lead to authoritarian rule

SEE VOTERS ON A2

**Verdict as vindication:** Bragg is lauded for a quiet, no-fuss tack. **A3**

**Key moments:** Explaining the verdict in the hush money trial. **A10**

## ‘In the name of God’

Native American children endured sexual abuse for decades at Catholic-run boarding schools



SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST

**Clarita Vargas, 64, who attended St. Mary’s Mission School in Omak, Wash., exits the church there. Of 500 such schools, most run or funded by the U.S. government, at least 80 were operated by the Catholic Church or affiliates.**

BY SARI HORWITZ, DANA HEDGPETH, EMMANUEL MARTINEZ, SCOTT HIGHAM AND SALWAN GEORGES

Clarita Vargas was 8 when she was forced to live at St. Mary’s Mission, a Catholic-run Indian boarding school in Omak, Wash., that was created under a U.S. government policy to strip Native American children of their identities. A priest took her and other girls to his office to watch a TV movie, then groped and fondled her as she sat on his lap — the beginning of three years of sexual abuse, she said. ¶ “It haunted me my entire life,” said Vargas, now 64. ¶ Jay, a 70-year-old member of the Assiniboiné and Gros Ventre tribes whose surname is not being used to protect his privacy, was sent to St. Paul Mission and Boarding School in Hays, Mont. When he was 11, Jay said, a Jesuit brother raped him in a shack next to the pine grove where the priests cut down Christmas trees. ¶ “He said if I ever told anybody that I would go to hell,” Jay recalled. ¶ Geraldine Charbonneau Dubourt was one of nine sisters who said they were sexually or physically abused by priests at an Indian boarding school in Marty, S.D. She said that she was 16 when a Catholic priest repeatedly raped her in a church basement and that a doctor and several Catholic sisters later forced her to undergo an abortion. ¶ “If somebody says you get over the abuse, trust me, you don’t get over it,” said Dubourt, 75.

SEE PRIESTS ON A24

### The hidden legacy of Indian boarding schools in the United States

For 150 years, the U.S. government separated Native American children from their families. **A23**

## Mexico City may be weeks away from running dry

BY KASHA PATEL  
IN MEXICO CITY

Raquel Campos’s water issues started in January, when her condo building’s manager sent residents a message saying that the city hadn’t delivered water to its cistern. Four days later, taps in the upscale residence went dry.

Campos has lived in the wealthy Polanco neighborhood for 18 years and said she has never experienced water issues like this. Her husband paid to shower at a nearby hotel, and she called water delivery companies that were overwhelmed with a sudden deluge of requests from the neighborhood. The water in Campos’s building came back within a few days, but with much lower pressure. Water is now delivered about



LUIS ANTONIO ROJAS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**A soldier in the Mexican army carries a jug of water in April. A vital water system is at historic lows amid ongoing drought.**

every two weeks. Each unit has paid to cover the cost, increasing their monthly condo expenses by 30 percent.

Water scarcity has long been an issue in Mexico City, with the brunt of the shortages happening in lower-income neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city center. But recently, residents in some of the city’s wealthier neighborhoods have also been running out of water as hot weather, low rainfall and poor infrastructure have converged to create a crisis across the sprawling metropolis.

Mexico City gets about a quarter of its water from the Cutzamala system, a series of reservoirs, water treatment plants

SEE MEXICO ON A16

**Mexico election:** Voters go to the polls today to pick a president. **A12**

## Former hostage recalls the brutality of Hamas captivity

BY SHIRA RUBIN

BEER SHEVA, ISRAEL — Moran Stella Yanai has told her story more times than she can count. She does not want to keep reliving Oct. 7, does not want that day to define her. But it feels like a duty now, she said, to speak for those who are not yet free.

“They cannot defend themselves in there,” Moran, 40, said, speaking from her living room in this southern Israeli city — just 25 miles from Gaza — surrounded by her jewelry and her art, Jewish religious texts, and by her dog and cat, both rescues.

“I want my sisters and brothers out of this hell.”

Six months after her release, Moran shared her experience in Hamas captivity with The Wash-



**Released Israeli hostage Moran Stella Yanai says she wants to speak for the hostages who aren’t yet free.**

ington Post, recounting the terror of her abduction, the cruelty of her captors, and the lasting toll of the ordeal on her mind and body. She hoped it would remind the public of the 125 hostages remaining in Gaza, she said. They include 17 women, and two children under the age of 5. At least 39 are already confirmed dead.

SEE HOSTAGE ON A14

**Cease-fire:** Pressure mounts on Netanyahu to back proposal. **A15**

## BOOK WORLD

Critic Peter Schjeldahl’s bold prose is shown in a posthumous collection.

## ARTS & STYLE

Joni Mitchell made music with the boys but stayed her own woman.

## BUSINESS

Are home prices still rising? Check the trends in your area.

## TRAVEL

A Hong Kong festival’s tradition is racing up a tower covered in buns.

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The Washington Post / Year 147, No. 53870



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