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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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U.K. voters hand levers of power to Labour

Victory ends 14 years of Conservative rule, marks pivot to a center-left path

BY WILLIAM BOOTH AND KARLA ADAM

LONDON — Keir Starmer and his renewed Labour Party won a landslide election in Britain on Thursday, according to the exit poll, ending 14 years of Conservative Party rule and moving toward a new government dominated by the center left.

This was an election that was more about mood than policy, and voters conveyed their frustration with the incumbent Tories and a willingness to take a chance on a “changed Labour Party,” as Starmer calls it, purged of its hard-left elements and socialist rhetoric.

The sophisticated exit poll, sponsored by Britain’s top broadcasters, found that Labour was on track to win 410 seats in the 650-

SEE STARMER ON A9

Intriguing origins: Starmer’s backstory is messy and complex. A9

In nation’s capital, Americans set aside divisions to mark July Fourth



CRAIG HUDSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Revelers watch the Independence Day fireworks display Thursday in front of the Reflecting Pool in Washington. Some people in D.C. for the holiday said they had the United States’ fraught political climate in mind while celebrating America’s birthday and contemplating the country’s origins. **Story, B1**

Delegate anxiety on Biden simmers

LEAD-UP TO DNC IS A WAITING GAME

They’re sticking with the president — for now

BY AMY GARDNER, COLBY ITKOWITZ AND NICOLE MARKUS

The thousands of delegates descending on Chicago for the Democratic National Convention next month have the power to choose their party’s nominee for president — at least in theory.

In practice, however, party delegates haven’t exercised independent authority in more than half a century. And even after President Biden’s stumbling performance in last week’s debate, more than three dozen delegates interviewed this week by The Washington Post said they planned to do what they were selected to do and make Biden, the runaway winner of primaries and caucuses nationwide, the Democratic nominee for president.

But amid growing calls from lawmakers, party officials and insiders for Biden to stand aside over concerns about his age and questions about his cognitive ability, doubt has also begun to creep in. Although most expressed unwavering support, several delegates said they were nervous about his chances amid faltering poll numbers and intraparty division. Some were candid about their preference for another option, perhaps Vice President Harris. All said they will vote for Biden — unless he bows out.

“In my heart of hearts, I wish

SEE DNC ON A4

His call: Any decision to exit would be entirely Biden’s, allies say. A4

Early to bed: Biden tells governors he needs to get more sleep. A5

Biden’s new teleprompter reliance, even in living rooms, draws attention

BY MATT VISER, TYLER PAGER AND JOSH DAWSEY

PALO ALTO, CALIF. — President Biden was in a multimillion-dollar home here, standing in an open kitchen as donors sat on couches and chairs arranged around the adjacent living room.

Everything about the scene spoke to the kind of intimate setting that donors pay thousands of dollars to attend, with a chance to have a small interaction with the world’s most powerful officeholder in someone’s home.

But there was a discordant addition to the cozy gathering where about 30 people had as-

sembled: At the front of the room, where the president spoke, stood a lectern and a teleprompter, two large screens hovering about six feet high.

It was a physical manifestation of the type of accommodation that White House officials over the past year have come to make for an aging president. But while

most of the changes have been aimed at addressing his physical ailments — tennis shoes and shorter steps to Air Force One so he doesn’t trip, smaller distances to cover so his short shuffle isn’t as pronounced, having his wife nearby to assist on stairs — the teleprompter has been the primary accommodation to assist a president whose speech can meander and who can seem to lose his train of thought.

For much of his political career, one of Biden’s hallmarks has been his plain-spokenness, his identity as an off-the-cuff pol who did

little to shield his real thoughts. He was a self-professed “gaffe machine,” a trait that endeared him to voters even if it gave his advisers heartburn.

“No one ever doubts I mean what I say,” the president has often said. “The problem is, I sometimes say all that I mean.”

In recent years, his aides have tried to rein him in more, especially as he ascended to a position where a small verbal misstep can

SEE BIDEN ON A5

The Take: Democrats want to see sharpness, stamina from Biden. A2

With a skatepark, she found a way to reconnect

Denet Deal left a high-paying job in fashion to give back to her ancestral homeland of Navajo Nation

BY ROMAN STUBBS

NEWCOMB, N.M. — The wind rolled off the Chuska Mountains and along the desert floor, whipping red dust and tumbleweed across the pavement of Two Grey Hills Skatepark. It was a pale Sunday morning in May, and Amy Denet Deal stood on a ledge, tying a crimson bandanna around her silver braids and smiling as she watched the children swerve down ramps in the middle of the storm.

“Amy!” a young boy yelled, excited to greet the woman who helped bring the skatepark to this remote northwest corner of the Navajo Nation.

“Hi, honey. How you doing?” she replied. “You’ve grown a foot since I last saw you!”

Denet Deal, 59, considered herself younger than the boy in Diné (Navajo) years. She had reconnected with the tribe only five years earlier after a lifetime of displacement, giving up most of her belongings and a lofty salary as a corporate sports fashion executive in Los Angeles to move to New Mexico.

The pandemic opened her eyes to the inequities children on the reservation face, including high rates of diabetes, mental health

SEE SKATING ON A6



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

Shawn Shine Harrison, who leads free clinics at Two Grey Hills Skatepark, skates in Santa Fe, N.M.

Barrett is charting her own path on the bench

Justice shows willingness to break ranks with fellow conservatives

BY ANN E. MARIMOW

The dissent was biting, accusing the Supreme Court’s conservative majority of “feeble” and “cherry-picked” arguments that inaccurately downplayed the Environmental Protection Agency’s role in protecting air quality.

Of course, all three liberal justices signed on.

But the writer was a conservative nominated by President Donald Trump: Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who charted a distinctive path during her breakout fourth term on the high court.

With piercing questions from the bench, and a willingness to break ranks with other Republican nominees in an era of conservative dominance on the court, Barrett played a new role this term — calling for a pragmatic, incremental approach to some cases in which her colleagues wanted to move more aggressively.

“She is an independent mind at work on a court that often falls

into camps — and that’s refreshing to see,” said Deepak Gupta, a Washington lawyer who tracks the court’s work.

“The justice to watch,” said Melissa Murray, a New York University law professor and co-host of a liberal podcast about the court called “Strict Scrutiny.”

Barrett, a former law professor and federal appeals court judge, is still close to the right-leaning center of the court, and most often aligned with Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh. She spoke for them in a case involving emergency access to abortion care in Idaho but broke with them with her dissent in the EPA lawsuit, which granted emergency relief to states and energy companies that challenged the Biden administration’s smog-reduction plan.

In another high-profile case, Roberts tapped her to write the decision rejecting a Republican-led effort to limit White House contacts with social media platforms about potential misinformation — a notable assignment for the second-most-junior justice. Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel A. Alito Jr. and Neil M. Gorsuch dissented.

SEE BARRETT ON A14

IN THE NEWS

Boil advisory lifted Officials said D.C. and Arlington residents could use tap water as normal after confirming that an aqueduct “never deviated” from EPA standards. B1

Luxury merger The parent of Saks Fifth Avenue will acquire Neiman Marcus as the brands try to draw younger consumers. A2

THE NATION NATO allies, concerned about President Biden, will watch him closely at next week’s summit. A3

Supreme Court rulings are poised to affect the regulation of drugs, tobacco and more. A3

A summer coronavirus uptick is underway. What you should know about new variants. A14

THE WORLD Hurricane Beryl was poised to strike Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula. A14

In Kyiv, statues are covered, protected and removed as Ukraine grapples with its history. A8

THE ECONOMY Taxes, tariffs, housing and immigration all play into proposals President Biden and Donald Trump have for the U.S. economy. A10

THE REGION D.C. police identified one of the two teenagers killed in a fiery crash at the end of a 30-mile chase Tuesday. B1

OBITUARIES Tom Prasada-Rao, a folk singer who crafted songs about social justice including “\$20 Bill,” died at 66. B5

STYLE Should you wear shorts to work? Unless your last name is Fetterman, probably not. C1

WEEKEND Post food critic Tom Sietsema feasts on D.C.-area dining bargains that showcase the cuisines of Ethiopia, Nicaragua and more.

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