



**BIDEN WINS**  
(From top, anti-clockwise) US President-elect Joe Biden and his wife Jill, and vice President-elect Kamala Harris and her husband Doug, celebrate with family at their post-election rally, after the news media announced that they have won the 2020 US presidential election, in Wilmington, Delaware; People celebrate their win in Atlanta, Georgia; Biden supporters react to his victory speech at BLM Plaza in Washington, DC; and people watch celebratory fireworks in Wilmington, Delaware.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Georgia runoffs to settle Senate race

AFP, Washington

Control of the US Senate and prospects for united rule in Congress for incoming president Joe Biden will boil down to two runoff elections in Georgia, with Democrats and Republicans positioning for an epic political battle.

Party leaders and the candidates themselves on Saturday presented the southern state as the new ground zero in a war to either clear a congressional path to help Biden implement many of his proposed reforms, or put a check on President Donald Trump's White House successor.

Democrats were aiming to flip the upper chamber of Congress on Election Day by ousting at least three Republicans, a result that would present Biden with an incoming president's dream: both the Senate and House of Representatives under his party's control.

Had Trump won, Democrats would have needed to gain four seats in the Senate -- where Republicans currently enjoy a 53-47 majority -- as the vice president, as president of the Senate, breaks a 50-50 tie. Democrats so far have a net gain of just one seat. Now they have a lifeline.

Georgia Republican Senator David Perdue leads in his race, but at 49.8 percent he is short of an outright majority, meaning he faces Democrat Jon Ossoff in a January 5 runoff as stipulated by state rules.

A second Georgia race, a special election for the seat of Senator Kelly Loeffler who was appointed to replace a retiring lawmaker last December, is also headed to a special election on the same day. And the eyes of the political world were rapidly honing in on the state.

Georgia has been reliably Republican for a generation, and winning even one of the Peach State's Senate seats would be an uphill challenge for Democrats.



## WHAT WILL TRUMP DO NOW?

When networks projected he had lost his bid for reelection to Joe Biden, President Donald Trump was playing golf. He'll soon have plenty more time to enjoy the links if he so desires. But it is not expected that he will be quite and engage in cgaritable work soon.

### ANOTHER SHOT AT PRESIDENCY?

Some allies have already spoken of Trump planning a rematch in 2024. Only one other president, Grover Cleveland, has served non-consecutive terms, winning in 1892 after narrowly losing reelection four years earlier. Former White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said with understatement that Trump -- who has refused to concede and made unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud -- "doesn't like losing." "I would absolutely expect the president to stay involved in politics and would absolutely put him on the shortlist of people who are likely to run in 2024," he told an Irish think tank. "He's a very high-energy 74-year-old."



### TRUMP TV?

Trump's main product to fund his lifestyle has been his own name. According to his disgraced former lawyer Michael Cohen, the 2016 presidential run itself was conceived as a "branding opportunity" -- until he unexpectedly won. Trump had rebuilt his public profile in the 2000s as the host of reality TV series "Celebrity Apprentice" following a string of bankruptcies. The president has hinted about seeking to start a "Trump TV" brand as he has increasingly complained about Fox News, accusing the channel that helped fuel his rise of being insufficiently right-wing.

### LEGAL WOES AND PRISON?

No less plausible is a scenario where Trump is embroiled in serious legal problems. Prosecutors in New York are already probing Trump's hush money payment to a porn star, his tangled business dealings and mysterious accounting practices. Then there are those old rape and other sexual assault allegations. As president, Trump is largely protected from prosecution. Some have speculated that he may again challenge accepted norms by trying to issue a pre-emptive pardon to himself. Despite the defeat he remains president till Nov 20, 2021.

### ROAD TRIP?

Or, just maybe, Trump will want to get away from it all. However implausible this sounds, he has dropped a few hints. The thrice-married New York-born hotel developer and television celebrity has made no secret that he longs for some comforts of his pre-White House days. "I had a nice life. I had the greatest life," Trump said in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in his final campaign rally.

SOURCE: AFP

## WORLD MEDIA REACTION TO BIDEN WIN

## 'Liberator' to 'masked enemy'

AFP, Paris

With headlines such as "God Bless America", powerful media outlets around the world welcomed the defeat of Donald Trump but warned president-elect Joe Biden faced enormous challenges in healing the United States.

The international press also focused on the feat of Kamala Harris, Biden's running mate who will become the United States' first female, and first Black, vice president.

"A new dawn for America", read the headline of The Independent in Britain, showing a photo of Biden standing next to Harris and noting her historic achievement.

The Sunday Times went with a picture of a black woman draped in the US flag and the headline: "Sleepy Joe wakes up America", taunting Trump by using the derogatory nickname he had used for Biden.

The Sunday People tabloid blared in capital letters: "GOD BLESS AMERICA".

Germany's mass-market Bild newspaper carried a photo of Trump with a headline: "Exit without dignity". "What a liberation, what a relief", reported Germany's left-leaning Sueddeutsche Zeitung broadsheet.

In Australia, the Daily Telegraph tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch's media empire also focused on Trump's expected defiance and described him as a "hotball of fury".

Iran's ultraconservative papers unsurprisingly

celebrated the downfall of Trump, a leader who had applied a "maximum pressure" policy and punishing sanctions since his 2018 withdrawal from a landmark nuclear agreement.

Still, they reserved little warmth for Biden. "The maskless enemy left, the masked enemy arrived," warned conservative publication Resalat.

In Saudi Arabia, the only Gulf country yet to comment on the election results, the pro-government Okaz online newspaper questioned a US strategy in the Middle East under Biden after years of bolstered relations between Riyadh and the Trump administration.

Brazil's leading media outlets reported Trump's defeat in the context of its own populist leader, Jair Bolsonaro. "May Brazil's leaders seize the spirit of the times -- or die, like Trump, who has already left it too late," wrote Folha de Sao Paulo, one of Brazil's major daily newspapers.

Spain's centre-right El Mundo newspaper said Biden's win was a goodbye to Trump's populism, and described Harris as a "symbol of renewal".

Sweden's biggest daily, Dagens Nyheter, headlined its opinion-editorial piece: "Bittersweet victory -- Biden will struggle to heal the US".

Sweden's conservative Svenska Dagbladet daily warned of the dangers posed by the many millions of Americans who will continue to believe Trump's dangerous rhetoric that the election had been stolen from him.

"Election is over -- but conflict continues," read its headline.

## 4 Indian soldiers, 3 militants killed in Kashmir gunbattle

REUTERS, Srinagar

Four Indian army soldiers and three militants were killed in Kashmir yesterday, an Indian Defence Ministry spokesperson said, in the bloodiest gunbattle in the disputed region since April this year.

An army patrol noticed suspicious movement along the LOC in the early hours of Sunday, Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia said.

"Army troops were rushed to the area and militant movement was tracked by surveillance devices. A heavy gun battle followed in which three militants were killed," he said. Four army soldiers were killed in the gunbattle, he said.

India scrapped Jammu and Kashmir's special status last year and made it a federal territory. It also imposed a crackdown on dissent and sent tens of thousands of troops to maintain peace in the region.

This is the highest number of army casualties along the Line of Control in Kashmir since April this year. Five Indian troops and an equal number of militants were killed in April this year when armed militants were challenged by Indian troops in the area.



Supporters of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party react in front of the party's headquarters in Yangon yesterday, as votes are being counted after polls closed in the election. Inset, a woman cast her ballot in Yangon.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



## America's first 'second gentleman'

When Kamala Harris makes history as the first woman and first Black US vice president, her husband Doug Emhoff will break his own new ground: as the original "second husband."

Harris and Emhoff, who married in 2014 -- she for the first time, he for the second -- will also be the first mixed-race couple to occupy their positions. He is white while she is the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants. Both are 56.

The contours of Emhoff's new role as the nation's "second husband" -- some prefer "second gentleman" -- have yet to be determined; he has been vague about his plans so far.

Traditionally, the spouses of presidents and vice presidents have been expected to forge a careful balance of supportiveness and independence. Many pick a charitable cause to promote.

Emhoff is an accomplished lawyer specializing in media, sports and entertainment law.

He took leave in August from the multinational DLA Piper, which has lobbying offices in Washington. That could raise prickly conflicts of interest with Harris's work.

Emhoff marks another milestone: he would be the first Jew to be part of America's first or second families.

When Emhoff met Harris on a blind date arranged by friends, it was "love at first sight," he later said.

His children by his first marriage -- Cole, named after John Coltrane, and Ella, named after Ella Fitzgerald -- have embraced their stepmother as "Momala."

The "second husband-elect," incidentally, shares one thing with Donald Trump: both are avid golfers.

SOURCE: AFP

# A mighty relief in battle to save Earth

AFP, Paris

Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump has brought hope to climate warriors who now see a better chance to save the planet through massive projects to limit global warming.

Activists and scientists feared further climate change destruction from another four years of Trump in denial in the White House. His defeat totally changes the landscape.

The veteran Democrat leader has pledged to take the United States back in to the Paris climate agreement that Trump forced the country to leave, and which happened officially only on November 4.

The Democrats have drawn up a 1.7-billion-dollar plan to turn the US carbon neutral by 2050.

"Joe Biden's historic election win is the first step towards avoiding climate catastrophe," tweeted Jennifer Morgan, executive director of Greenpeace International.

"The American people are demanding a climate champion in president-elect

Biden and in Kamala Harris," his vice-president, she added.

France's former prime minister Laurent Fabius, who chaired the Paris agreement negotiations, cheered Biden's success saying it "raises new hopes in the indispensable fight against climate change".



"Now is the moment to relaunch global, concrete and coordinated climate action" ahead of next year's COP26 conference on biodiversity and COP26 on climate, Fabius urged.

For Laurence Tubiana, one of the architects of the Paris accords, "The Biden-Harris Administration has an historic opportunity to enact one of the

world's largest green stimulus efforts, to accelerate the US economy toward sustained emissions reductions while rebuilding and creating a fairer society."

To stay within the Paris deal's 1.5C warming limit since pre-industrial times and cut the growing ferocity of wild weather, greenhouse gas emissions need to be slashed almost 50 percent by 2030, UN climate experts say.

That will require radical economic reform on a global scale, a challenge experts hope will be more within reach under a Biden presidency.

The Climate Action Tracker group put out a statement saying the election outcome could prove "a tipping point" that puts the Paris agreement's 1.5C limit "within striking distance".

That would however need the US to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and for Europe, China and Japan to also keep their climate commitments.

Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann declared himself "cautiously optimistic" with Biden at the helm.

"But make no mistake. The sobering reality is that even if every country

meets their commitments under the Paris agreement (and many, including the US and EU are currently falling at least a bit short), that gets us less than half way to where we need to be."

"I.e. on a path to limiting warming below 2C (let alone the more stringent 1.5C many are now calling for)," Rockstrom said.

Biden's room for manoeuvre will depend greatly on his ability to push through ambitious climate legislation. And for that he will need the US Senate, which may yet stay under a Republican majority. With both parties equal on 48 senators, two seats will be run-off in the state of Georgia on January 5. Without the Senate, Biden will have to count on the multitude of non-federal bodies from the states and cities to companies in the effort to meet previous Paris targets.

However, Potsdam Institute co-director Ottmar Edenhofer warned: "Generations to come can either remember the Biden-Harris Administration as one that failed great expectations -- or as one that really served the US people, and the world."

## THAI MONARCHY REFORM PROTEST

## Clash as protesters march to palace

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thai police yesterday used water cannon against thousands of protesters marching to deliver a message to King Maha Vajiralongkorn to demand reforms to curb the powers of his monarchy and the removal of the government.

It was only the second time water cannon had been used in months of largely peaceful protests to call for greater democracy and the departure of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader.

Reuters journalists estimated more than 10,000 protesters marched from Democracy Monument in central Bangkok.

The protesters reached a barricade of buses and barbed wire. Police fired water cannon to stop them pushing forward, but witnesses said some had managed to reach the area known as Sanam Luang - or Royal Field - next to the Grand Palace. Protesters had said they sought to deliver a message to the Royal Household Bureau.

The protesters say the monarchy has helped enable decades of military domination of Thailand, most recently by approving the premiership of Prayuth, who seized power in a 2014 coup and kept it after disputed elections last year.

The protesters seek to put the king more clearly under the constitution, reversing changes he made shortly after taking the throne as well as moves he made to take personal control of the palace fortune and some army units.