

New Biden Bid
To Help Pay Off
Student Loans

President Unveils Plan
in a Key Swing State

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR

MADISON, Wis. — President Biden on Monday announced a large-scale effort to help pay off federal student loans for tens of millions of American borrowers, seeking an election-year boost by returning to a 2020 campaign promise that was blocked by the Supreme Court last year.

Mr. Biden’s new plan would reduce the amount that 25 million borrowers still owe on their undergraduate and graduate loans. It would wipe away the entire amount for more than four million Americans. Altogether, White House officials said, 10 million borrowers would see debt relief of \$5,000 or more.

“While a college degree still is a ticket to the middle class, that ticket is becoming much too expensive,” Mr. Biden said during a speech to a small but enthusiastic audience filled with supporters. “Today, too many Americans, especially young people, are saddled with too much debt.”

Mr. Biden announced the plan in Madison, Wis., the capital of a critical swing state and a college town that symbolizes the president’s promise to make higher-education affordability a cornerstone of his economic agenda.

But it is a promise he has so far failed to achieve, largely because of legal challenges from Republicans and other critics. They accuse Mr. Biden of unlawfully using his executive authority to enact a costly transfer of wealth from taxpayers who have not taken out federal student loans to those who have.

Officials did not say how much the new plan would cost in coming years, but critics have said it could increase inflation and add to the federal debt by billions of dollars.

Mr. Biden said his new effort would help the economy by removing the drag of enormous debt from people who would otherwise not be able to buy a home or pursue a more economically sound future.

“We’re giving people a chance to make it,” Mr. Biden said. “Not a guarantee. Just a chance to make it.”

Mr. Biden’s announcement was a presidential do-over. In the summer of 2022, he put in motion a plan to wipe out \$400 billion in student debt for about 43 million borrowers. That was blocked by the Supreme Court, which said he exceeded his authority. In the months since, Mr. Biden has waived small amounts of debt using existing programs. But now he is attempting a larger effort closer to the scale of his first try.

The original plan relied on a law called the HEROES Act, which the administration argued allowed the government to waive student debt during a national emergency like the Covid pandemic. The justices disagreed after Republican attorneys general and others challenged the debt waiver plan.

Continued on Page A14

Day and Night and Day

Millions turned out on Monday to witness North America’s last total solar eclipse until 2044. Some shared what the moment meant to them. Pages A9-11.



RENAUD PHILIPPE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MONTREAL With school closed for the spectacle, children at Parc Jean-Drapeau gazed skyward.



ANDREA MORALES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MURPHYSBORO, ILL. A viewing party outside a brewery. Parts of the Midwest were prime locations.



CASSANDRA KLOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BURLINGTON, VT. Crowds thronged Lake Champlain as the time for the eclipse approached.

Israel’s Review
Of Aid Attack
Raises Doubts

Analyzing Safeguards
And Broken Protocols

LONDON — Israel’s account of its attack on a World Central Kitchen convoy raises significant legal questions even if the strike was the result of a series of mistakes, experts say.

The Israeli military announced on Friday that its preliminary investigation had revealed a string of errors that led to the deaths of seven aid workers. It took responsibility for the failure, saying that there were “no excuses” and citing “a mistaken identification, errors in decision-making and an attack contrary to the standard operating procedures.”

But the description of events that has emerged raises broader questions about the military’s ability to identify civilians and its procedures for protecting them, legal experts told The New York Times — including new concerns about whether Israel has been complying with international law in its conduct of the war in Gaza more generally.

The first, most basic principle of international humanitarian law is that civilians cannot be targets of a military attack. Militaries must have procedures in place to distinguish between civilians and legitimate military targets.

“In the case of doubt as to a convoy or person’s status, one is to presume civilian status,” said Tom Dannenbaum, a professor at the Fletcher School at Tufts University who is an expert on humanitarian law. “And so, attacking in the context of doubt is itself a violation of international humanitarian law.”

Humanitarian aid workers and aid facilities are entitled to heightened protections because they deliver relief to endangered civilians, said Janina Dill, a co-director of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict.

“These are civilian vehicles, first and foremost,” she said, referring to the World Central Kitchen convoy. “They’re also vehicles involved in humanitarian assistance missions, which are specifically protected. The people on these trucks should be presumed to be individuals involved in humanitarian assistance missions, which means they are protected persons.”

Israeli soldiers presumed that some of the World Central Kitchen vehicles were carrying militants, according to the Israeli military’s explanation, even though they had been observed joining an aid convoy and later departing from a food warehouse.

Some officers did not review the military’s own documentation about the convoy to confirm that it included cars in addition to the trucks. If they had, they would have discovered that the

Continued on Page A6

ACTIVE FIGHTING
SUBSIDES IN GAZA,
BUT WAR GOES ON

ENTERING NEW PHASE

Analysts Expect Smaller
Israel Raids in Effort
to Stem Hamas

By PATRICK KINGSLEY

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military’s departure from southern Gaza over the weekend has left the devastated territory in a state of suspense as active fighting there receded on Monday to its lowest ebb since a brief truce with Hamas in November.

But even as some observers hoped Israel’s withdrawal from the area might portend a new cease-fire, both Hamas and Israeli officials suggested the war was not yet over.

Analysts said the withdrawal of Israeli troops suggested only that the war had entered a new phase, one in which Israel would continue to mount small-scale operations across Gaza to prevent Hamas’s resurgence. That strategy, they said, could occupy a middle ground between reaching a lasting truce with Hamas and ordering a major ground assault into Rafah, Hamas’s last stronghold in southern Gaza where more than one million Palestinians have taken refuge.

In a statement on Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel said that while Israel was still pursuing a deal to secure the release of its hostages in Gaza, it was also seeking “total victory over Hamas.”

“This victory requires entering Rafah and eliminating the terrorist battalions there,” Mr. Netanyahu said.



Southern Gaza on Monday after Israeli forces retreated.

hu said. “This will happen; there is a date.” He did not specify the date.

By withdrawing now without having fulfilled its stated mission of eliminating Hamas and without empowering an alternative Palestinian leadership, Israel has left behind a power vacuum in Gaza, in which Hamas could regroup and re-emerge as a military force across much of the territory.

The Israeli military said on Sunday that its 98th Division had left Khan Younis in southern Gaza in order “to recuperate and prepare for future operations.” That leaves

Continued on Page A7

Abortion Should Be Left to States, Trump Says

This article is by Maggie Haberman, Jonathan Swan and Michael Gold.

Former President Donald J. Trump said in a video statement on Monday that abortion rights should be left up to the states, remarks that came after months of mixed signals on an issue that he and his advisers have worried could cost him dearly in the election.

Mr. Trump said his view was that the states should decide through legislation, and that “whatever they decide must be

Stance Draws Criticism
From Conservatives

the law of the land, and in this case, the law of the state.” But he added that he was “strongly in favor of exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother.”

“Many states will be different, many will have a different number of weeks or some will have more conservative than others, and that’s what they will be,” Mr. Trump said in the video, which he

posted on his Truth Social website.

“At the end of the day, it’s all about will of the people,” he added. “That’s where we are right now and that’s what we want — the will of the people.”

Mr. Trump’s comments came as Democrats, who saw their voting base energized against Republicans in 2022 after the repeal of Roe v. Wade, have attacked the former president at every turn on the issue of abortion.

Mr. Trump, who has been trying to balance his desire to please the

Continued on Page A13

When War Comes Home, and Does Not Leave

This article is by Emile Duce, Oleksandr Naselenko and Thomas Gibbons-Neff.

Two years after Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the hourly artillery duels, airstrikes and pitched fighting in the country’s east and south have turned the more than 600-mile front line into a scarred frontier. Parts of it may be uninhabitable for years, if not decades. Villages and towns are destroyed. Fields are mined. Roads are barely recognizable.

But clinging to the wreckage of

Surviving in Ukraine’s
Front-Line Villages

their homes, and hometowns, are residents who refuse to leave. Buoyed by volunteers who deliver aid and their own battle-hardened survival instincts, they carry on with their lives in an unending test of endurance. The reasons they stay are many: to care for disabled family members, to look after pets or livestock or, plainly, their love of home.

But in enclaves where the thuds of artillery serve as white noise, war is never far away.

In the southern port city of Kherson and the villages around it, residents have endured months of Russian occupation, a cold winter without electricity and an unending barrage of artillery shells.

Some left after the initial Russian occupation and returned in November 2022, after Ukraine’s military retook the city, but weekly evacuations continue. Kherson’s current population is around 60,000. Before the war, al-

Continued on Page A8



INTERNATIONAL A4-8

Vatican Statement on Gender

Pope Francis approved a document that called gender fluidity and transition surgery threats to dignity.

PAGE A4

In Space, and Then in Hiding

Rising temperatures in Antarctica are putting meteorites out of view before researchers can collect them.

PAGE A5

NATIONAL A9-17, 20

A Princess in Washington

Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to the United States, who is following in her father’s footsteps, is trying to steer relations at a difficult time.

PAGE A20

A Blueprint for Flipping a Seat

A special election victory in Alabama cheered Democrats eager to put reproductive rights on the ballot.

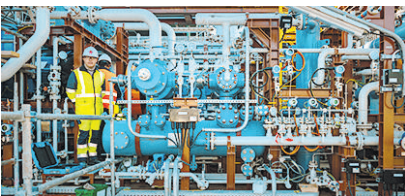
PAGE A12

SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

Patients Staying the Course

The new obesity drugs might be an exception to a chronic problem: the failure to stick with medication.

PAGE D1



BUSINESS B1-5

Plans to Bury CO₂ Under Sea

The Italian energy giant Eni sees future profits in pumping carbon dioxide waste into depleted gas fields.

PAGE B1

Big Lift for U.S. Chip Making

With up to \$6.6 billion in grants, TSMC expects to build a factory and upgrade a planned facility in Phoenix.

PAGE B1

ARTS C1-6

Comedy and Vulnerability

In a memoir, the actress Rebel Wilson, known for roles in the “Pitch Perfect” movies, speaks frankly about money, her sexuality and her fear that losing weight would hurt her career.

PAGE C1

Oklahoma’s Movie Boom

To attract film and television production, states have to try to offer the best incentives. The competition is pushing their spending on Hollywood subsidies ever higher.

PAGE C1

OPINION A18-19

Lydia Polgreen

PAGE A19



SPORTS B6-9, 12

After a Loss, Perfection

South Carolina’s victory against Iowa in the N.C.A.A. women’s basketball tournament final capped a rebound from last season’s letdown.

PAGE B6

