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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024 • \$3

# Justices extend hold on student loan relief

8 million still in limbo as court leaves ruling on Biden program in place

BY ANN E. MARIMOW AND DANIELLE DOUGLAS-GABRIEL

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to immediately clear the way for the Biden administration's new student loan relief and repayment plan, adding to uncertainty about the future of a program that would affect millions of borrowers and has become part of the sharp political debate over who is responsible for hefty tuition debt.

Biden introduced the program, Saving on a Valuable Education, last fall as millions of Americans resumed student loan payments after a hiatus of more than three years because of the pandemic.

The plan, commonly known as Save, offered lower monthly payments and a faster path to loan cancellation. It launched months after the justices divided along ideological lines to invalidate a separate, \$400 billion Biden administration program to forgive student loan debt.

More than 8 million people are enrolled in the new program, with debts already cleared for more than 400,000 borrowers.

But like its predecessor, it was quickly challenged by Republican state officials, who accused Biden of exceeding his legal authority and decied any effort to use taxpayer money to help college graduates with their debt. The Congressional Budget Office estimates Save will cost some \$230 billion over the next decade, but the Biden administration says the figure is closer to \$156 billion.

Republican-led states filed two

SEE COURT ON A4

**Legal uncertainty:** Colleges drop race-conscious scholarships. **A3**



JAAFAR ASHTIYEH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Israeli soldiers during a raid at the Nur Shams camp in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday. The Palestine Red Crescent Society said at least 10 Palestinians were killed during Israel's major military operations, which is focused on the northern West Bank areas.

# Telegram CEO Durov indicted, must stay in France

Charged with complicity in child abuse images, aiding organized crime

BY JOSEPH MENN

French prosecutors indicted the chief executive of popular messaging service Telegram on Wednesday on charges of complicity in the distribution of child sex abuse images, aiding organized crime and refusing lawful orders to give information to law enforcement.

Prosecutors charged Pavel Durov with multiple offenses after four days of questioning fol-

lowing his arrest at an airport near Paris, ordering him to put up a 5 million-euro bond and barring him from leaving France.

The 39-year-old billionaire's case is an unprecedented test of the power of governments over multinational tech companies operating under widely varying laws around the world. Durov's Telegram is unusual for being run from a nonaligned Middle Eastern country, the United Arab Emirates, and for declaring that it shares no information with authorities anywhere about messages or activities on the site.

Durov has French and UAE citizenship, having moved out of Russia in 2014 amid what he said was a dispute with authorities there over what he would turn



**Russian-born billionaire Pavel Durov's Telegram messaging service has about 950 million users.**

over about users of the social network he started, VKontakte.

While X owner Elon Musk and others have decried the investigation of Durov as a challenge to free speech, child safety advocates say Telegram permits more illegal activity, including abuse images, than any other major network. The laws in most countries, including France and the United States, do not protect platforms from prosecution over ille-

gal content.

Telegram has some 950 million total users and is especially popular in Russia, elsewhere in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. It is used for private messaging, public posts and group chats. Only one-to-one conversations can be encrypted, and those only if users choose the option, meaning the company could turn over everything else to governments if it wanted to.

Prosecutors said that Parisian authorities began a preliminary investigation in February 2024, when the National Office for Minors grew frustrated that it and other agencies were not getting responses to their legal demands for information about Telegram

SEE DUROV ON A14

# Massive Israeli raids kill at least 10

WEST BANK ASSAULT IN ITS 'FIRST PHASES'

Drones and bulldozers back hundreds of troops

*This article is by John Hudson, Loveday Morris, Frances Vinal, Claire Parker, Hazem Balousha and Cate Brown*

TEL AVIV — Hundreds of Israeli troops launched raids in several areas of the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, carrying out mass arrests, engaging in gun battles and killing at least 10 Palestinians, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

The Israel Defense Forces said counterterrorism operations began overnight, focused on the northern West Bank areas of Jenin, Tulkarm and al-Fara'a refugee camp. It said that the operation was carried out in coordination with Israel Border Police forces and the internal security service and that it's in the "first phases," IDF spokesman Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani said Wednesday.

Eyewitnesses described drones scanning the skies, bulldozers ramming through terrain and armored personnel carriers on the streets as the IDF surrounded hospitals and set up checkpoints, and went house to house making arrests.

Medics transported 10 people who were killed to medical facilities in Jenin and nearby Tubas, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said in a statement. The Jenin Battalion, a Palestinian militant group, said six of its members were killed; it was not clear whether those casualties were included in the count announced by

SEE WEST BANK ON A12

**West Bank militants:** A primer on the groups and their abilities. **A12**

# On a runway in Tonga, hate feels a galaxy away

With their safety under threat, trans women called leitis find refuge and pride in a pageant

BY MICHAEL E. MILLER AND MATTHEW ABBOTT  
IN NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA

The contestant stood just off-stage, nervously shifting in her stilettos. A pink dress clung to her muscular frame, and her hair was pinned back with red flowers.

Sophia Vea had spent most of her 21 years hiding who she was: a trans woman in a devoutly Christian country. Her father had beaten and disowned her for acting like a girl. Classmates had bullied her. Strangers had hissed horrible things.

But now she was ready to sashay down a catwalk in front of almost 2,000 people at the Miss Galaxy pageant, a beauty contest for trans women in Tonga. As many as 20,000 people — equivalent to one-fifth of this Pacific island nation's population — would be watching online around the world.

Every step she took onstage would be against the law in Tonga, where laws governing sex and dress criminalize trans life. The laws are rarely enforced, activists say, but nonetheless create a climate of fear that has contributed to two brutal killings in seven years.

While other countries — notably in Africa — have become increasingly hostile toward LGBTQ+ people in recent years, Tonga's laws stand in contrast to



MATTHEW ABBOTT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sophia Vea, 21, wears a dress made from discarded mosquito nets in Miss Galaxy, a beauty pageant for Tonga's leitis, or trans women.

a long tradition of fakaleiti, which literally means "like a lady."

Leitis, as they prefer to be called, are considered a third gender that isn't exactly equivalent to the Western definition of transgender women. Most live as women and use female pronouns, but some do not. They have played an important role in Tonga, and in other parts of Polynesia, including in elder care and serving the royal family.

But now in Tonga, as in the United States, the growing influence of the Mormon Church and evangelical ministries — many with U.S. ties — has led to a backlash against LGBTQ+ rights in the past decade, experts said. Miss Galaxy has faced protests and accusations of "promoting sin."

At the same time, increasing international funding and attention on LGBTQ+ issues are spurring calls for change here.

Sitting near the front of the crowd at the Miss Galaxy pageant on a recent evening was Piveni Piukala, an outspoken member of parliament who has vowed to try to decriminalize the technically illegal aspects of leiti life in the next few months, even if it costs him his seat.

"This is long overdue," Piukala said in an interview. "The question is, do we accept them as

SEE PAGEANT ON A10

ELECTION 2024

# Attempt to enforce rules led to dispute at sacred cemetery

BY ISAAC ARNSDORF, JOSH DAWSEY AND DAN LAMOTHE

Earlier this month, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's campaign contacted military officials about visiting Arlington National Cemetery to mark the third anniversary of the Islamic State bombing that killed 13 U.S. service members during the evacuation from Afghanistan.

Federal law prohibits election-related activities at military ceme-

teries, and Arlington is the most prestigious and sacred of all. Pentagon officials were deeply concerned about the former president turning the visit into a campaign stop, but they also didn't want to block him from coming, according to Defense Department officials and internal messages reviewed by The Washington Post.

Officials said they wanted to respect the wishes of grieving family members who wanted Trump there, but at the same time

SEE CEMETERY ON A6

# Trump, Harris take diverging paths on police accountability

BY DAVID NAKAMURA AND ROBERT KLEMKO

Donald Trump is vowing to end the Biden administration's wide-reaching efforts to curb abusive policing, promising if he returns to the White House to rein in federal oversight of local law enforcement and empower officers to aggressively "clean up" American cities.

Among the changes Trump has promoted: allowing the use of stop-and-frisk to interrogate sus-

pects, rescinding a Biden administration ban on the transfer of military equipment to local police departments, deputizing local officers to enforce immigration laws, and deploying the National Guard to fight crime.

"The Democratic party has a war on with police," Trump said at a campaign rally last month in Charlotte. "We will give our police back their power, protection, respect that they deserve."

On the campaign trail and in

SEE POLICING ON A7

## IN THE NEWS

**Murder trial verdict** A former county official in Nevada was found guilty in the killing of investigative journalist Jeff German. **A4**

**Suing for freedom** A Tunisian soccer player in U.S. custody argues that he has been illegally detained for over a year in a private prison in Virginia. **B1**

### THE NATION

**The FBI** released new photos related to the man who shot at Donald Trump but still did not identify a motive. **A2**  
**The Polaris mission** faces delays after a separate booster failed. **A4**

### THE WORLD

**A potential takeover** of Japanese staple 7-Eleven has fans worried about quality. **A9**  
**Reuters** denied a Russian claim that its security adviser slain in Ukraine was a spy. **A12**

### THE ECONOMY

**A technical issue** caused delays last week in the release of closely watched jobs data, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said. **A13**  
**Most baby food** sold in the United States does not meet WHO nutritional standards, a study found. **A14**

### THE REGION

**The first rioter** to enter the Capitol on Jan. 6 was sentenced to over four years in prison. **B1**  
**An Alexandria park** is closed indefinitely at the request of the Secret Service because it is near GOP vice-presidential candidate JD Vance's home. **B1**

### STYLE

**Sonia Sotomayor** is involved in a musical for children, part of what the justice calls her proudest legacy. **C1**

### LOCAL LIVING

**Though long maligned** as inferior to their in-ground counterparts, aboveground pools still have plenty of fans.

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