



BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Greg Mascher with his granddaughter Raylix. It could be months, if ever, before health officials have answers about East Palestine.

D.A. Signaling
Trump Is Likely
To Be Charged

This article is by William K. Rashbaum, Ben Protess and Jonah E. Bromwich.

The Manhattan district attorney’s office recently signaled to Donald J. Trump’s lawyers that he could face criminal charges for his role in the payment of hush money to a porn star, the strongest indication yet that prosecutors are nearing an indictment of the former president, according to four people with knowledge of the matter. The prosecutors offered Mr. Trump the chance to testify next week before the grand jury that has been hearing evidence in the potential case, the people said. Such offers almost always indicate an indictment is close; it would be unusual for the district attorney, Alvin L. Bragg, to notify a potential defendant without ultimately seeking charges against him.

In New York, potential defendants have the right to answer questions in the grand jury before they are indicted, but they rarely testify, and Mr. Trump is likely to decline the offer. His lawyers could also meet privately with the prosecutors in hopes of fending off criminal charges.

Any case would be the first indictment of a former American president and could upend the 2024 presidential race in which Mr. Trump remains a leading contender. It would also elevate Mr. Bragg to the national stage, though not without risk, and a conviction in the complex case is far from assured.

Mr. Trump has faced an array of criminal investigations and special counsel inquiries over the years but has never been charged with a crime, underscoring the

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After Derailment, Health Fears in an Ohio Town

By EMILY BAUMGAERTNER

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — When the railroad crossing gate lowered in front of Greg Mascher’s Chevy Tahoe, his youngest granddaughter shrank down in the back seat and pulled a worn American flag blanket over her eyes. She worried that the train was going to wreck — again.

“Tell me when it’s all over, Papa,” his granddaughter, Raylix, 7, pleaded as the rail cars rumbled through — ones much like the Norfolk Southern cars that had derailed here almost three weeks earlier, resulting in a toxic spill that appeared to cause symptoms of chemical poisoning in hundreds of households.

Absence of Information
Adds to Concern for
Long-Term Effects

Mr. Mascher, 61, who is raising three granddaughters with his wife, Traci, had not sent them back to school since they had developed rashes, vomiting and headaches. He glanced at Raylix, still covering under the blanket, in his rearview mirror.

“When it’s all over, huh?” he sighed, adjusting the crucifix around his neck. “Not sure anybody can tell you girls that.”

Mobile health clinics and cam-

era crews have begun to pack up and leave this town of 4,700, but for the Mascher family and their neighbors, frightening questions remain: How could they know if they had been poisoned by the spill? Were toxins still lingering in the air, the water and the soil surrounding their houses? Would they develop lifelong health problems? And would the relatives who had evacuated the town — like Mr. Mascher’s daughter, her husband and their three daughters, cousins who are like sisters to Raylix — come back?

On Thursday, the chief executive of Norfolk Southern, Alan H. Shaw, encountered more angry questions, when he appeared be-

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ALEJANDRA RUBIO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Race to Clear Roofs

After blizzards, the Lake Tahoe region braced for rain and the risk of collapsing ceilings. Page A18.

As Legacy of Elvis Is Rekindled, the Family Fights Over His Estate

By MATT STEVENS

When the camera panned to Priscilla Presley and her daughter, Lisa Marie, they appeared enraptured.

Austin Butler had rekindled the good memories of Elvis with his portrayal in a lauded biopic. And for a few magical minutes on that January evening, Mr. Butler was

there, on the stage at the Golden Globes, conjuring the voice and radiating the charm of the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll as he accepted a best actor award.

Lisa Marie clasped her hands around her mouth. Priscilla placed her hand on her heart. Mother and daughter had had their run-ins over the years, but they were together again — nestled at a table, like family.

Ex-Wife Sues to Steer
a Trust’s Millions

“One of the greatest nights of my career,” said Jerry Schilling, a Presley family friend and business associate who escorted Lisa Marie that evening.

But days later, the sadness that has long trailed the family had again taken hold. Lisa Marie, only 54, died suddenly. Within weeks, Priscilla, who had long helped administer Elvis’s estate, went to court to challenge the validity of documents that say her granddaughter, the actress Riley Keough, is now the sole trustee.

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In \$6.8 Trillion Budget,
Biden Seeks to Tax Rich
And Increase Social Aid

NEWS ANALYSIS

A Move to Recapture
Centrist Identity

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — In his announcement video kicking off his presidential campaign in the spring of 2019, Joseph R. Biden Jr. never mentioned the word “deficit.” Nor did the word escape his lips when he accepted the Democratic Party nomination a year later. Nor did it appear once in the party platform he approved.

But as he unveiled a budget proposal on Thursday, Mr. Biden made curbing the budget gap one of his centerpiece promises. The budget plan, the White House said in a statement, would strengthen the country by “reducing the deficit by nearly \$3 trillion over the next decade.”

The newfound attention to the nation’s fiscal health comes as Mr. Biden for the first time faces a Republican-controlled House bent on forcing him to pare spending, and shortly before he is expected to announce a campaign for a second term. After two years championing some of his party’s top progressive priorities, the president lately is speaking more to the concerns of the political middle, seeking to recapture the more centrist identity that long defined him.

Not only is he increasingly focused on deficit reduction, Mr. Biden last week abandoned fellow Democrats by rejecting a new District of Columbia measure reducing mandatory minimum sentences for some violent offenses, rather than be tagged as soft on crime. And more and more, his administration is turning toward tougher policies to stem a near-record-high tide of illegal immigration, including possibly reviving the practice of detaining migrant families who cross the southwestern border illegally.

“It’s a good day to be a moderate Democrat,” said Matt Bennett, head of Third Way, a centrist Democratic advocacy group. “We’re back, better than ever.” The White House, he said, understands the need to avoid allowing Republicans to outflank Democrats. “They get the necessity of keeping the high ground on culture war issues like crime and immigration.”

That does not mean Mr. Biden has suddenly found common cause with Republicans by any means. After signing legislation adding nearly \$5 trillion to the deficit in the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office, Mr. Biden pro-

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A Top G.O.P. Senator
Sees ‘a Road Map
for Fiscal Ruin’

By JIM TANKERSLEY

WASHINGTON — President Biden on Thursday proposed a \$6.8 trillion budget that sought to increase spending on the military and a wide range of new social programs while also reducing future budget deficits, defying Republican calls to scale back government and reasserting his economic vision before an expected re-election campaign.

The budget contains some \$5 trillion in proposed tax increases on high earners and corporations over a decade, much of which would offset new spending programs aimed at the middle class and the poor. It seeks to reduce budget deficits by nearly \$3 trillion over that time, compared with the country’s current path.

It reaffirms Mr. Biden’s case that he can prevent the growing



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Biden promoted his plan Thursday in Philadelphia.

debt burden from weighing on the economy while expanding spending and protecting popular safety-net programs — almost entirely by asking companies and the wealthy to pay more in taxes.

But after claiming credit for a \$1.7 trillion decline in the annual deficit over the past year, Mr. Biden now sees the deficit increasing again in the 2024 fiscal year, to \$1.8 trillion. The jump is larger than other forecasters, like the Congressional Budget Office, have projected. It is driven by rising costs of servicing the national debt as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates to curb inflation and by new programs the president is proposing that are not fully offset by tax increases in their first year.

The plan drew swift criticism from Republicans, who are locked in an economically perilous debate with Mr. Biden over the borrowing limit, which House conservatives refuse to raise unless he agrees to sharp spending cuts.

Senator Charles E. Grassley of
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Russia Fires Hypersonic Missiles
In Largest Air Assault in Weeks

By ANDREW E. KRAMER

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia launched its biggest aerial barrage in weeks on Thursday, blasting targets across Ukraine with a diverse array of weapons, including its newest hypersonic missiles, in what it said was retaliation for an armed incursion into Russian territory last week.

Volley of missiles streaked into Kyiv and other cities overnight and in the predawn, setting off air raid sirens and jarring people from their sleep with thunderous booms, and killing at least six people, Ukrainian officials said.

The strikes included six of the new Russian missiles known as Kinzhals, the most Russia has

used in a single wave since the war began a year ago, according to Ukraine’s Air Force. They are hypersonic — meaning they travel at more than five times the speed of sound, and Russia has hinted at much higher speeds — and can maneuver in flight, making them all but impossible to shoot down.

Several missiles hit electrical power plants, damaging three of them, continuing a Russian campaign to black out Ukrainian cities and undermine morale, and Moscow’s forces followed their usual tactic of trying to overwhelm air defenses with waves of

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End of a Philippines Icon?

The government wants to replace the country’s passenger vehicles, known as jeepneys, with minibuses. PAGE A4

Africa’s Life Expectancy at Risk

The rates of illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension are climbing but are rarely diagnosed or treated. PAGE A6

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Louisville Police Report Card

The Justice Department’s findings of abusive and discriminatory behavior by the police came as no surprise to the city’s residents. PAGE A13

Exonerated After 18 Years

The Brooklyn district attorney said a flawed photo lineup helped imprison a man for a killing he did not commit. A judge ordered his release. PAGE A17

Fetterman Serving Remotely

A dozen miles from the Capitol, the Democratic senator from Pennsylvania is keeping up with his work while being treated for depression. PAGE A10



WEEKEND ARTS C1-14

Focusing on Mom and Dad

Larry Sultan’s photos, featured in a play and in a gallery show, raise the issue of who controls a family’s image. PAGE C9

An Intriguing ‘Doll’s House’

Jamie Lloyd’s revival of Ibsen’s 1879 drama throbs like an episode of “CSI: Norway,” Jesse Green writes. PAGE C1

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Russia’s Nuclear Superstore

Europe moved fast to wean itself off oil and natural gas from Russia, but severing its ties to Rosatom, its state-owned nuclear power company, is proving to be a more difficult proposition. PAGE B1

Window Into Murdoch Empire

Court filings from the Dominion Voting Systems defamation suit against Fox News have provided a peek into how Rupert Murdoch shapes coverage at his news organizations. PAGE B1

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David Brooks

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J.R. Smith’s Second Act

The former N.B.A. star was bored, and a little lost, when his basketball career ended, so he enrolled at an H.B.C.U. and joined the golf team. PAGE B6

