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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Hamas accepts Gaza cease-fire deal

Israel reports it will continue talks, but starts Rafah attack

By Sam Mednick, Josef Federman and Bassem Mroue
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — After Hamas announced its acceptance Monday of an Egyptian-Qatari cease-fire proposal, Israel said its leaders approved a military operation in the southern Gaza town of Rafah and began striking targets in the area.

Still, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would send negotiators to continue talks on the deal.

The high-stakes diplomatic moves and military brinkmanship left a glimmer of hope alive — but only barely — for an accord that could bring at least a pause in the 7-month-old war that has devastated the Gaza Strip.

Hanging over the wrangling

was the threat of an all-out Israeli assault on Rafah, a move that the United States strongly opposes and that aid groups warn will be disastrous for about 1.4 million Palestinians taking refuge there.

Hamas' abrupt acceptance of the cease-fire deal came hours after Israel ordered an evacuation of Palestinians from eastern neighborhoods of Rafah, signaling an invasion was imminent.

Netanyahu's office said the proposal Hamas accepted was "far from Israel's essential demands" but that it would nonetheless send negotiators to continue talks on a deal.

At the same time, the Israeli military said it was conducting "targeted strikes" against Hamas in eastern Rafah. The nature of the strikes was not immediately known, but the move may aim to keep the pressure of the Rafah threat on as talks continue.

President Joe Biden spoke with

Netanyahu on Monday morning and reiterated U.S. concerns about an invasion of Rafah, telling him a cease-fire was the best way to protect the lives of Israeli hostages, according to a National Security Council spokesperson, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the call before an official White House statement was released.

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Ameri-

Turn to Deal, Page 9



DePaul University students Beemnet Desta, of Ethiopia, center, and Suchita Farkiwala, of India, right, talk after making tote bags at a social gathering for international students on Jan. 26 at the school's downtown campus. CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Johnson reverses course on migrants

Asylum-seekers won't move from downtown to site in 11th Ward

By Alice Yin
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson announced Monday he is pulling his proposal to move migrants from downtown to a new shelter in the South Side 11th Ward before the Democratic National Convention in the face of stiff opposition from the local alderman and the building's owners, the latest setback in the administration's attempts to house asylum-seekers.

The change came after the owners of the property said Johnson never informed them of his plans to use the building at 3951 S. Canal St. for a shelter. When the Tribune asked the city about that apparent disconnect, the Department of Family and Support Services released a Monday statement saying the city is "no longer considering" doing so.

"We were surprised to hear news reports of the City's plan to possibly use our property as a migrant shelter," Bajaj Medical, the pharmaceutical company that owns the building in the New City neighborhood, said in a Sunday statement. "Bajaj Medical has not been contacted by City officials, and has not approved, and does not intend to approve any public use of this property."

DFSS' statement acknowledged that was true but clarified that "while City staff had not had conversations with the owner, there were conversations held with the owner's broker of the property and our vendor."

Representatives with Bajaj Medical, which lists Ram Chakroborty as its registered agent in state business records, did not respond to a request for further comment on Monday.

Ald. Nicole Lee, 11th, told the Tribune earlier, on Sunday,

Turn to Migrants, Page 4

Colleges gaining global influences

Illinois ranks fifth in international enrollment as Indian students help drive boom. What does that mean for schools?

By Alysa Guffey | Chicago Tribune

Suchita Farkiwala, a DePaul University senior from Ahmedabad, India, vividly remembers the day she flew into O'Hare International Airport more than three years ago to enroll in undergraduate classes.

Despite having no family or friends in the city, she had a crew of DePaul community members who met her at the airport, welcoming her to Chicago.

Since that first day in the city, she has assumed the role of mentor to younger students from around the world pursuing higher education.

"You never walk alone," Farkiwala said of being an international student at DePaul. "You walk with support from all of the teachers and the community."

Farkiwala is one of more than 1 million international students who enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs during the 2022-23 school year, when international enrollment in the United States jumped 11.5%, according to federal data published in November. Roughly 55,000 international students attended colleges in Illinois in the 2022-23 academic year, ranking the state fifth in the nation for international enrollment.

The uptick in international students has been especially spurred by students from India, which became the most populous country in the world in April 2023.

At DePaul, administrators pride themselves on being a school with a large international student community. The number of international students doubled — even as overall enrollment at the university is down.

DePaul's administration attributed the increase to a jump in Indian students, as more

Turn to Enrollment, Page 4

Faculty members support protesters

A group of University of Chicago faculty gathered on campus to express support for the pro-Palestine encampment on the school's Main Quadrangle a day after the university announced it had suspended negotiations with the protesters. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

Chicago startups win Pulitzers

Two South Side nonprofit news startups have won Pulitzer Prizes. A collaboration between City Bureau and Invisible Institute won the local reporting award. Invisible Institute also shared a second Pulitzer for audio reporting with USG Audio. **Business**

Benefits for injured off-duty CPD officers can be murky



Chicago police Officer Danny Golden is pushed during the St. Jude Police Memorial March on May 7, 2023, at Gold Star Families Memorial and Park on the Museum Campus. BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Process that grants on-duty pension status not always consistent

By Sam Charles
Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Police Department and its pension board have now each determined that former Officer Danny Golden was performing official police duties just before he was shot and paralyzed outside a bar in the Beverly neighborhood nearly two years ago.

It's a decision that came months after Golden applied for on-duty disability benefits in December, highlighting what can appear to outsiders as a subjective process with no hard and fast rules on how long it may take to reach that decision, or which officers or

their families are certain to receive them.

Pension board meetings to rule on duty disability applications are open to the public. CPD, meanwhile, will make its own determination as to whether an officer was injured "in the line of duty," though the process is opaque. Superintendent Larry Snelling said last week that any officer, whether working a shift or not, can be injured in the line of duty so long as they are responding to "criminal activity."

It was not known when the Police Department ruled Golden's injuries to be duty-related, but his pension board application was approved at the board's March meeting. He applied for on-duty disability benefits about two months after his allotted medical

Turn to Officers, Page 2

