

Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Truce and Hostage Deal



Demonstrators in Tel Aviv on Wednesday urged the release of all hostages from Gaza. Relatives worried some might be left behind.

Millions Made Off Drug Plan Meant for Poor

By ELLEN GABLER  
Soon after being diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, Virginia King sat in an outpatient clinic in Santa Fe, N.M., while a nurse injected her with a powerful drug to slow damage to her spine, where the disease had spread. Even though the drug had a list price of about \$2,700, the hospital that owned the cancer center billed Mrs. King’s insurance company \$22,700. Her insurer paid \$10,000, but the hospital wanted more. She got a bill for over \$2,500 — “more than half my take-home salary for a month,” said Mrs. King, 65. She had unknowingly sought care from a hospital that participates in a federal program allowing it to buy drugs at a steep discount and charge patients and insurers a higher amount, keeping the difference.

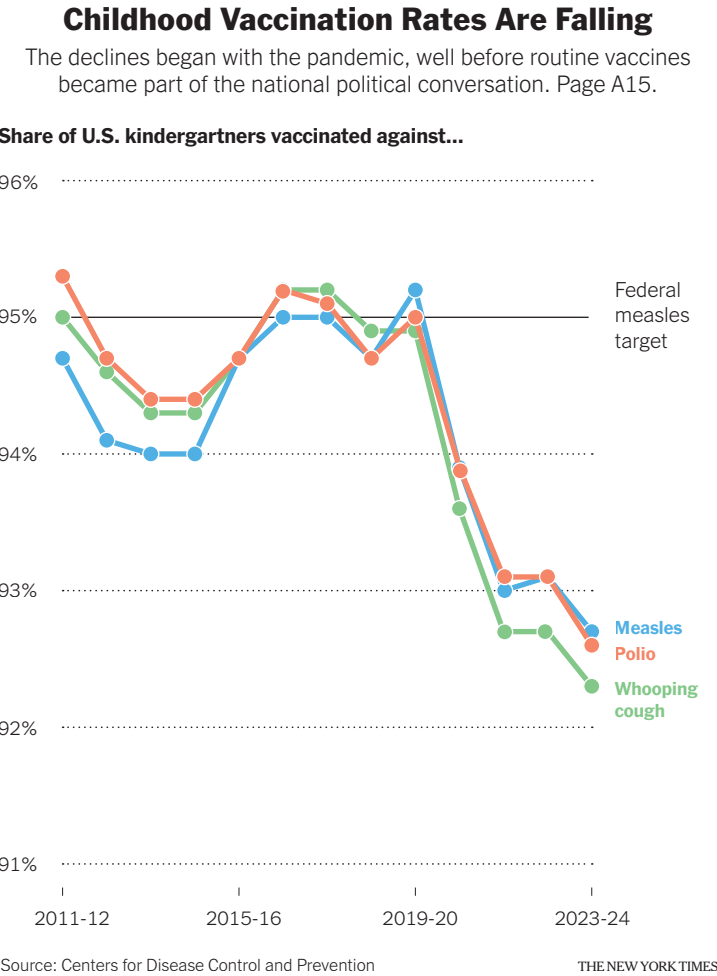
The intention behind the program was for a small number of safety-net providers to have access to affordable drugs and be able to expand their care for needy patients. But instead, the program has exploded: Now, more than half of nonprofit hospitals in the United States take part. While some providers say it has helped keep their doors open, others — especially large nonprofit health systems — have been accused of maximizing payouts and swallowing the profits. The program’s escalation has driven up health care costs for employers, patients and taxpayers, studies show. In 2023, for instance, New York changed the way it administers drug benefits for Medicaid patients, in part because it discovered the cost of the federal program had increased by more than 200 percent over three years, said Amir Bassiri, the state’s Medicaid director. “The numbers and the growth were staggering,” he said. “We all bear the cost.” Along the way, one little-known middleman has been cashing in, The New York Times found. The company, Apexus, has worked behind the scenes to supercharge the program, according to interviews with current and former employees and emails, internal reports and other documents.

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Their Hard-Won Black Haven Had Thrived. Then It Burned.

By CORINA KNOLL  
LOS ANGELES — Scenic and charming and tucked into the foothills, Altadena seemed like a secret just outside the reaches of Los Angeles. “I felt it was like back home — peaceful and calm and a little secluded,” said Shirley Taylor, who was raised in North Carolina and arrived in 1979. The town also offered a striking element: a flourishing community of middle-class Black families. Ms. Taylor, a manager for the Social Security Administration, knew she and her two sons would fit right in. She purchased a three-bedroom Craftsman on Las Flores Drive for about \$75,000 that offered a view of the mountains from the primary bedroom. “Oh, it was beautiful,” she said. “I called it ‘my little country home.’” Around them, a community thrived. Everyone was an auntie or uncle or cousin. Neighborhood barbecues were lively events. Children played in the streets and hurried home when someone rang a bell at sunset. A network of artists, county employees, blue-collar workers and retirees bloomed. Now, the future of what was historically a Black enclave within Altadena is in peril, after Ms. Taylor and many other residents lost homes in the blistering Eaton fire. Entire neighborhoods in the town of about 42,000 have become deserts of ash. The loss of homes is staggering. The loss of a unique haven, shattering. Nearly 21 percent of the residents directly affected by the Eaton fire are Black — a high proportion, considering that Black residents account for only 8 percent of the overall population of Los Angeles County. Some of those who

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Warning of Tie To Cancer, U.S. Bans a Red Dye

By ANDREW JACOBS and TEDDY ROSENBLUTH  
The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday banned the use of Red Dye No. 3 in food, beverages and drugs, more than three decades after the synthetic coloring was first found to cause cancer in male laboratory rats. The dye, a petroleum-based additive, has been used to give candy, soda and other products their vibrant cherry red hue. Consumer advocates said the F.D.A.’s decision to revoke the authorization was long overdue, given the agency’s decision in 1990 to ban the chemical for use in cosmetics and topical drugs. Under federal rules, the F.D.A. is prohibited from approving food additives that cause cancer in humans or animals. “This is wonderful news and long overdue,” said Melanie Benesh, vice president for government affairs at the Environmental Working Group, one of several organizations that petitioned the agency to take action on the additive. “Red Dye 3 is the lowest of the low-hanging fruit when it comes to toxic food dyes that the F.D.A. should be addressing.” Beginning in 2027, companies would have to start removing the dye from their products. Imported foods sold in the United States would also have to remove the additive. Although the dye is still used in hundreds of products, many companies have been switching to other food colorings, a move that

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N.Y.P.D. Sharply Restricts Its High-Speed Chases

By MARIA CRAMER and HURUBIE MEKO  
New York City police officers will no longer engage in high-speed chases of drivers who break traffic laws or commit other low-level offenses, the Police Department said, in an effort to stop the crashes that have led to serious injuries and deaths in America’s most densely populated major city. A new policy will prohibit offi-

Trump and Biden Came Together Over Talks

By DAVID E. SANGER and MICHAEL D. SHEAR  
When President-elect Donald J. Trump’s Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel on Saturday to pressure him on a cease-fire deal in Gaza, there was someone on the speakerphone: Brett H. McGurk, President Biden’s longtime Mideast negotiator. Mr. McGurk was in Doha, Qatar, leading the final round of negotiations for a cease-fire. It was a vivid example of cooperation between two men representing bitter political rivals. Rarely if ever have teams of current and new presidents of different parties worked together at such a high-stakes moment, with the fate of American lives and the future of a devastating war hanging in the balance. Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden publicly claimed credit for the breakthrough. “This EPIC ceasefire agreement could have only happened as a result of our Historic Victory in November,” Mr. Trump wrote on his social media site even before the deal was formally announced in the Middle East. At the White House, Mr. Biden told reporters that his administration had worked tirelessly for months to convince the two sides to halt the fighting. He called it “one of the toughest negotiations I’ve ever experienced” and gave credit to “an extraordinary team of American diplomats who have worked nonstop for months to get this done.” As he left the room, a reporter asked Mr. Biden, “Who gets credit for this, Mr. President, you or Trump?” Mr. Biden stopped, turned around and smiled. “Is that a joke?” he asked. But despite the tension between the current president and the next one, their representatives in the Middle East described a cooperative working relationship in the weeks since Election Day.

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Agreement Takes Effect Sunday if Approved

This article is by Patrick Kingsley, Adam Rasgon, Aaron Boxerman, Ronen Bergman, Isabel Kershner and Peter Baker.  
JERUSALEM — Negotiators announced on Wednesday that they had reached a cease-fire deal for the war in the Gaza Strip, 15 months after a devastating Hamas-led attack on Israeli soil set off a relentless military campaign with few parallels in recent history. In the attack that set it all in motion, the Oct. 7, 2023, raid on southern Israel led by Hamas fighters, some 1,200 people, most of them civilians, were killed, stunning Israelis. In the months that followed, an estimated 45,000 Palestinians in Gaza, many of them also civilians, were killed and entire towns leveled. On Wednesday, Gazans were allowing themselves to hope for an end to the long months of hunger, destruction and fear, while Israelis were anxiously readying themselves to welcome home dozens of men and women taken hostage by Hamas during the 2023 attack. Under the terms of the provisional deal, reached in the waning days of the Biden administration, the Israeli military will begin to pull back its force and Hamas will begin releasing some of the hos-

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South Korea’s Leader Detained  
A weekslong standoff ended on Wednesday when officers stormed the presidential residence to serve a warrant. Page A5.

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The brief abduction of a Chinese actor who was trafficked to Myanmar has rattled tourists from China. PAGE A6

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Ukraine kept a vital coal mine running until the last moment, when Russian forces finally reached its gates. PAGE A7



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John Ratcliffe, Donald J. Trump’s pick for the agency’s director, seemed likely to win some Democratic support. PAGE A13

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Moon landers from Firefly Aerospace of Texas and Ispace of Japan launched from the same SpaceX rocket. PAGE A17

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Karen Wynn Fonstad, 59, was a novice cartographer who created an atlas of the setting of “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings.” PAGE B11

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The disaster in Los Angeles will affect public health, industries, local budgets and housing costs for years. PAGE B1

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Guy Pearce wasn’t interested in the Hollywood rat race, but “The Brutalist” has earned him Oscar buzz. PAGE C1

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A collaboration by the pianist Vikingur Olafsson and the composer John Adams will now travel the world. PAGE C1



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In an era of fast fashion, designers say there has been a growing demand for these one-of-a-kind garments. PAGE D1

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