



MOHAMMED ABED/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Using a makeshift stove to cook food on Sunday in Rafah, where many refugees are staying after having been displaced several times.

Israel Promises Civilian Safety Before Assault

This article is by **Isabel Kershner**,
Andrés R. Martínez and **Sarah
Maslin Nir**.

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, brushing aside a chorus of international condemnation, said Sunday that a ground invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah would move forward as soon as Israel completed plans for the more than a million people sheltering there to be allowed to move to safety.

“Those who say that under no circumstances should we enter Rafah are basically saying: ‘Lose the war,’” Mr. Netanyahu said on “This Week With George Stephanopoulos.”

But given the complexity of an operation in Rafah, a ground invasion does not appear likely to happen any time soon, analysts said, though the city has already been hit repeatedly by airstrikes. More than half of Gaza’s 2.2 million residents fled there to avoid fighting farther north, packing the city with refugees with nowhere else to go.

One Hamas official, Basem Naim, said Mr. Netanyahu was “deluding himself” if he thought that threatening to invade Rafah would increase the pressure on Palestinian negotiators to agree to Israel’s terms for a cease-fire. More than 28,000 people in Gaza, many of them women and children, have already been killed since the war began in October, Gazan health officials say.

“Such an invasion would mean more massacres and intensify the humanitarian disaster,” Mr. Naim said in a text message on Sunday.

Yaakov Amidror, a retired Israeli general and national security adviser, said that while Israel

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Couple Returns to Kibbutz Ravaged by Oct. 7

By **RONI CARYN RABIN**

KFAR AZZA, Israel — When Ayelet Khon moved back to the Kfar Azza kibbutz with her husband two months after the brutal Hamas-led attack of Oct. 7, the first thing she did was hang a string of rainbow-colored lights up on the front patio.

At night, when darkness drenches this community, the twinkling colors are the only lights visible.

“We are going to keep these lights on and never turn them off

ISRAEL DISPATCH

— even if we’re out for the evening — they are lights of hope,” Ms. Khon said she told her husband, Shar Shnurman.

Eight hundred people used to live here, including families with children who scampered about in the evenings. Everyone who survived the attack was evacuated on Oct. 8. Since then, their homes have been dark. Even the streetlamps are gone, mowed down when tanks plowed

through the narrow lanes as the Israeli Army arrived to defend against the attackers.

Ms. Khon, 56, and Mr. Shnurman, 62, are the only residents who have returned so far. At night, the silence is eerie, punctured episodically by the thunderous sound of bombs exploding in Gaza.

Some people may think they’re crazy, coming back here, just the two of them, Mr. Shnurman said. But to him, coming home was natural.

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THE LOST IMAGES OF RIO

A pile of film negatives started a collector’s obsession to gather photos that show the history of Rio de Janeiro and the event that has made it world famous: Carnival. Pages A10-11.

That’s No Tire Shop. It’s the Mardi Gras King Cake Drive-Thru.

By **RICK ROJAS**

METAIRIE, La. — Of course Mardi Gras is about boundless revelry: the weeks of balls and the parades that shower the streets of New Orleans with beads. But beneath all that, it is also a period of metamorphosis.

A midwinter Tuesday transforms from the most mundane of

days into a festival of frivolity and vice. People shed the cocoons of their regular lives and emerge plumed in feathers and sequins.

And this year, just outside New Orleans, a tire shop that for as long as anyone can remember sold only car parts has become a bustling marketplace offering king cakes, the delicacy of the Carnival season, in just about any

conceivable flavor. All you have to do is drive up.

“Any idea of what you want?” Tiffany Langlinals asked a customer who pulled up on a Friday afternoon.

It is a daunting question at the King Cake Drive-Thru. Flaky or fluffy? Filled with cream cheese? What about strawberries, ice cream, even crawfish — or nothing

more than the traditional plastic baby? Cakes from more than a dozen bakeries are on offer.

Others have had the idea to sell king cakes culled from various local bakeries, at one location, like King Cake Hub in the Mid-City neighborhood of New Orleans. But the innovation of the King Cake Drive-Thru, which Ms. Langlinals

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G.O.P. Machine Hums in Battle For Santos Seat

By **NICHOLAS FANDOS**

MASSAPEQUA, N.Y. — It was the biggest event of Mazi Pilip’s campaign in a must-win special House election in New York. The No. 3 House Republican had flown in. A half-dozen congressmen led a crowd in chants of “Mazi! Mazi!”

There was just one thing missing from the Republican show of force at a Veterans of Foreign Wars hall the other day: the candidate, who was home observing Shabbat.

In any other race, her absence would have been a deal breaker. But on Long Island, the event vividly illustrated an open secret animating Tuesday’s contest to replace former Representative George Santos. Ms. Pilip’s name may be on the ballot, but the campaign belongs to the Nassau County Republican machine.

After decades of electoral losses and corruption scandals, the organization has roared back to life in the New York City suburbs, reviving a political tradition that has largely become an anachronism elsewhere in the country.

In just the last three years, Republicans have swept every major office in the county, filling high-profile posts and hundreds of patronage jobs with party regulars often obliged to return the favor come campaign season.

Joseph G. Cairo Jr., the group’s silver-haired chairman and de facto boss, handpicked Ms. Pilip, 44, a part-time county legislator, and is now serving as her chief

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MONEY SHARMA/AFP — GETTY IMAGES
A Jawaharlal Nehru statue at the college that bears his name.

Hindu Radicals Target Colleges As ‘Anti-India’

By **SAMEER YASIR**

NEW DELHI — Jawaharlal Nehru University, named for India’s first prime minister, is one of the country’s premier liberal institutions, a hothouse of strong opinions and left-leaning values whose graduates populate the upper echelons of academia and government.

But to the Hindu nationalists who hold power in India, the university and others like it are dangerous dens of “anti-India” ideas. And they are working to silence them.

Masked men have stormed the J.N.U. campus and attacked students, shouting slogans associated with a far-right Hindu group. Vocal supporters of the right-wing governing party who have been installed as administrators have suspended students for participating in protests and, in December, imposed new restrictions on demonstrations. Professors have

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A Teensy Glimpse of Royal Life
Queen Mary’s Dolls’ House at Windsor Castle outside London offers visitors a closer look for its 100th year. PAGE A4

Pakistan’s Online Coalition

With social media’s help, Imran Khan succeeded in elections as young people rebuffed the country’s military. PAGE A6

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Doubt Over Abortion Studies

Two articles questioning the safety of a popular abortion drug that were cited in a case now before the Supreme Court have been retracted. PAGE A17

Voter Drive by Black Churches

Two of Georgia’s largest Black church groups are teaming to bring Black voters in the state to the polls. PAGE A14

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Agent for Peace in Ireland

As the Irish prime minister, John Bruton made strides to end violence in Northern Ireland. He was 76. PAGE D11



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Patagonia has given \$71 million to wildlife restoration, dam removal and Democratic groups. PAGE B1

New Stress to the Grid

Electric utilities, used to peak demand in sizzling weather, are now straining to keep up in winter, too. PAGE B1

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A Major League Report Card

With baseball spring training camps opening this week, it is time to evaluate the work done during the off-season to see which teams passed and which teams failed. PAGES D2-3

N.B.A. Trade Deadline a Dud

Not a single All-Star-caliber player found a new home, in what could become a trend. Teams either didn’t have enough assets, or had already made deals. PAGE D4

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A Case Study for Housing

Via Verde, in the South Bronx, aspired to serve as a model of subsidized housing. A decade later, our critic checks in to see how it is working out. PAGE C1

