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THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024

Biden says US won't supply bombs to hit Rafah

Symbol of red handprints opens another divide

By Daniel Kool and Alexa Coultoff
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

Last weekend, protesters at Northeastern University interrupted two different commencement ceremonies by smearing red paint on their hands and holding them up for the crowd to see. And again, on Wednesday, pro-Palestinian protesters at MIT stamped red handprints on counterprotesters' Israeli flags as the two sides tried to shout each other down.

This red hand imagery has sparked a new debate in the already fraught conversation on

campuses about the Israel-Hamas war. Pro-Palestinian students note the symbol of bloody hands has often been deployed in antiwar protests and speaks to the soaring death toll in Gaza. But some Jewish leaders, al-

►MIT starts suspending pro-Palestinian protesters. B1.

ready alarmed by what they describe as a swelling show of anti-semitism on college campuses, said the students' waving of bloody hands recalls a 2000 incident where a mob of Palestinian-



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

At MIT, supporters of the Palestinians put red prints on Israeli flags that had been hung by counterprotesters.

Still committed to providing weapons for Israel's defense

By Zeke Miller and Aamer Madhani
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Biden said Wednesday that he would not supply offensive weapons that Israel could use to launch an all-out assault on Rafah — the last major Hamas stronghold in Gaza — over concern for the well-being of the more than 1 million civilians sheltering there.

Biden, in an interview with CNN, said that the United States is still committed to Israel's defense and will supply Iron Dome rocket interceptors and other defensive arms, but that if Israel goes into

Rafah, "we're not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells used."

The United States has historically provided enormous amounts of military aid to Israel. That has only accelerated in the aftermath of Hamas's Oct. 7 attack that killed some 1,200 in Israel and led to about 250 being taken captive by militants. Biden's comments and his decision last week to pause a shipment of heavy bombs to Israel are the most striking manifestations of the growing daylight between his administration and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. Biden said Wednesday that Israel's actions around Rafah had "not yet" crossed his red lines, but has repeated that Israel needs to do far more to protect the lives of civilians in Gaza.

The shipment was supposed to consist of 1,800 2,000-pound bombs and 1,700

RAFAH, Page A6

Bird flu spread in animals stirs more fears of leap to humans

Some disease experts say that though danger seems low, US should prepare now

By Adam Piore
GLOBE STAFF

Nichola Hill has been studying bird flu for more than a decade, but it wasn't until last month that she truly came to fear it.

The University of Massachusetts Boston researcher was standing on a spit of windswept beach on Nantucket, surrounded on three sides by the North Atlantic and swathed head to toe in protective gear. Dead birds lay along the stretch of shoreline. She'd spent years of her life traveling to viral hot spots in remote corners of the globe to gather samples for her research. Now, as Hill watched her team moving grimly among the carnage, methodically collecting blood samples, she felt profoundly vulnerable. The virus had arrived in her own backyard. And it suddenly felt unstoppable.

"Am I going to be the next case of a bird to mammalian spillover event?" Hill, an ecologist who studies how diseases jump between animals, recalls thinking. "The odds are low, but your imagination will take you there. It's not out of the question."

Hill knows better than most. She is among a small army of researchers racing to gather crucial data amid an unprecedented outbreak of H5N1, a highly contagious form of bird flu, to find answers to questions many of us would

BIRD FLU, Page A7



Chris Sale dominated the Red Sox, allowing no runs and striking out 10, in his first start against them since the trade to the Braves. C1.

House Speaker Mike Johnson easily battled down an attempt to oust him, with help from Democrats. A2.

Nantucket residents voted down a broad legalization of short-term rentals, sparking what will likely be yet another round of debate. D1.

Volodymyr Zhukovskyy said he wasn't responsible for the fatal collision that killed seven motorcyclists and revealed years of neglect at the Massachusetts RMV. B1.

Ukraine is preparing for electricity rationing after a major missile strike. A4.

No ray out

Thursday: Cloudy, cool. High 56-61.
Friday: Another day of it. High 50-55.
High tide: 12:17 a.m., 12:58 p.m.
Sunrise: 5:29 Sunset: 7:53
Weather, Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C10-11.

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A night to feel free



PHOTOS BY ERIN CLARK/GLOBE STAFF

With a prom theme of "Aloha," attendees were greeted with leis as they entered through the red curtain.

Prom hosted by hospital gives teens with chronic illnesses a reason to celebrate

By Amanda Milkovits
GLOBE STAFF

PROVIDENCE

Upstairs at the Hotel Providence on Friday afternoon, the room was filled with giddy anticipation. Two teenage girls knelt before a full-length mirror, applying false eyelashes, as other girls pulled their prom dresses off the racks and squeezed into them after getting complimentary hairdos and makeup.

Aby Houle, 17, of Burrillville, hugged her friend, 19-year-old Autumn Lawrence of Warwick, as they chatted about last year's prom and how excited they were for this night.

"It's worth it, a thousand percent," Houle said.

This is no ordinary high school prom. The girls were getting ready for the prom hosted by Hasbro Children's Hospital, an annual event for dozens of teens living with chronic medical conditions. Here, their matter-of-fact asides about hospital stays, surgeries, and chemo, their walkers and wheelchairs, all were eclipsed by bright chatter about what they wearing, seeing their friends, and the

PROM, Page A9



Addie Lowe hugged her boyfriend, Maxwell Grant.

'As with all things Steward, this too was horribly mismanaged. Despite the constant urging by Massachusetts to Steward to progress the sales process, it has simply dragged on.'

OFFICE OF
AG ANDREA CAMPBELL

State criticizes Steward's sales plan

Says it's too complex with system bleeding money

By Aaron Pressman and Robert Weisman
GLOBE STAFF

Massachusetts officials said bankrupt hospital operator Steward Healthcare has created an overly complicated plan to sell its eight facilities in the state at a time when the system is rapidly running out of money.

Attorney General Andrea Campbell's office complained in a new filing in the bankruptcy proceeding that Steward has separate sales processes for its hospitals that preclude a bidder from offering to buy all in one transaction, and had even excluded some po-

tential buyers from participating.

"As with all things Steward, this too was horribly mismanaged," Campbell's office wrote. "Despite the constant urging by Massachusetts to Steward to progress the sales process, it has simply dragged on."

And Steward, the state points out, doesn't have much time. Although its financial problems have been building for years and spiraled into a crisis last year after it fell behind on hundreds of millions of dollars in rent and payments to suppliers, Steward could run out of money to operate its hospitals as soon as the week of June 14, the com-

pany disclosed in its bankruptcy filing Monday. It received a court-approved \$75 million loan this week, but the company said it would need additional backing to continue operating.

Only days into its bankruptcy proceeding, Steward is already under the gun. The company's lawyer on Tuesday warned the federal judge overseeing the bankruptcy that a deadline to sell the Massachusetts hospitals by late June may be unfeasible. The aggressive timeline was a condition of a \$75 million loan Steward will receive while it reorganizes its debts.

A spokesperson for Steward did not respond to a request for comment.

STEWARD, Page A9