



**PALESTINIANS** in Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip, gather around a truck carrying bottles of drinking water sent by the United Nations Children's Fund. The Israeli cease-fire deal was secured after what one senior Biden administration official called "gut-wrenching" talks.

# ISRAEL, HAMAS AGREE TO BRIEF TRUCE

Deal will allow the release of 50 hostages in exchange for 150 detained Palestinians.

By **JEFFREY FLEISHMAN**, **LAURA KING**, **NABIH BULOS** AND **TRACY WILKINSON**

TEL AVIV — Israel and Hamas said they have agreed on a temporary truce that would suspend their 47-day war to allow the release of 50 women and children kidnapped by Hamas in exchange for a group of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

The move calls for a pause in fighting in a war that began when Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7 and — according to tallies from each side — has killed more than 14,270 people, mostly Palestinians. Ten hostages will be released on each day of the truce, Israeli officials said.

Although some details remain undisclosed, the deal — brokered by Qatari, Egyptian and U.S. senior leaders as well as diplomats in tense, on-and-off-again talks — is expected to slow Israel's invasion and bombing of Gaza while pausing a war that threatens to consume the Middle East and spread to Iran and Lebanon, where Hezbollah fighters have been shelling northern Israel for weeks.

Final steps to approve the deal came in marathon sessions of the Israeli war and security Cabinets that began Tuesday and dragged into Wednesday. The most hard-line right-wing members of the government opposed any agreement with Hamas.

The deal was secured after what one senior Biden administration official late Tuesday called "gut-wrenching" and "excruciating" negotiations that required frequent telephone calls involving President Biden; the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani; and Egyptian

## New era for O.C. Latino politics

Progressives, though outspent, prevented recall of Santa Ana council member.

**GUSTAVO ARELLANO**

On a typical evening, Chato's Bar and Grill in downtown Santa Ana serves not-bad Mexican food and cocktails to a half-empty dining room. On Nov. 14, the line was out the door — but tacos and tequila were the last thing on everyone's mind.



Supporters of Santa Ana Mayor Pro Tem Jessie Lopez were ready to party. For months, they had knocked on doors in Lopez's district in the northern, wealthier part of the city, fighting a recall effort against her.

Critics, fueled by nearly \$800,000 from real estate groups and the city's powerful police union, painted Lopez as an out-of-touch radical because she had voted for rent control and a civilian police oversight commission. Lopez, 34, who is in her first term, was one of four unabashed progressives on the council and seen as the easiest one to take out.

Despite being outspent 8 to 1, Lopez beat back the recall by a decisive 56% to 43%. That's why election night at Chato's was as

[See **Arellano**, A16]

## Underpass lot below 10 Freeway failed inspection before blaze

By **RACHEL URANGA**

The piles of wooden pallets stored with combustible liquids under Interstate 10 had been troubling Caltrans and state fire officials for at least three years before the materials went up in flames this month and caused the closure of one of Los Angeles' busiest freeways for more than a week, documents newly released from Caltrans show.

The fire is being investigated as arson. It also put a spotlight on the little-known \$34.6-million Caltrans lease program that allows private companies to rent out space underneath and next to freeways. Standing atop the Santa Monica Freeway early Sunday morning, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he expects to have on Wednesday an early statewide assessment of the program, which has



IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

**A FIREFIGHTER** walks past a truck that was burned in a giant pallet fire Nov. 11. Caltrans inspectors had noted hazards and lease violations at the lot.

more than 600 leases.

The fire prompted federal authorities to remind state transportation departments about federal regulations that limit the storing of flammable materials under highway bridges.

"This event in California again raises serious concerns about storing materials, including flammable, explosive, or hazardous materials, under bridges and other elevated structures," Federal Highway Administration officials wrote in a memo to state departments of transportation last week. They cited warnings from the National Transportation Safety Board about being vigilant for combustible materials under bridges after a similar 2017 fire shut down a stretch of I-85 in Atlanta.

Caltrans has leased the underpass where the fire [See **10 Freeway**, A10]



LOREN ELLIOTT For The Times

**PASTOR TODD** Benson at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, a historically Black institution in Oakland whose members have suffered from the housing crisis.

## A historic church's fight for housing

An established Black institution in Oakland is pushing back against rising rent and homelessness

By **PALOMA ESQUIVEL**

Four decades ago, during the heyday of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in West Oakland, hundreds would show up for worship on Sundays. The grand sanctuary of the historic Black church, with its stained glass windows and elegant wooden pews, got so full, if you arrived five minutes late it was standing room only.

These days, as many Black residents have left amid the high cost of housing, the services are largely empty, save for a couple dozen faithful who return week after week, some of them from faraway suburbs.

So it was that on a Sun-

day this fall, Pastor Todd Benson stood at the altar in the golden light of the stained glass and — addressing about 20 men and women and a handful of kids — he turned his sermon from the gospel of Matthew to an existential struggle for the Black community in West Oakland and the future of the church itself: the housing crisis.

The average rent of an apartment in the city is now more than \$2,700, he said, his voice rising. Housing costs are so high, adult children increasingly move far from their parents because they can't afford a home where they were born, he added. A handful of the elders in the

[See **Church**, A13]

### Crypto exchange, CEO plead guilty

Binance agrees to pay billions to settle charges of money laundering and U.S. sanctions violations. **BUSINESS**, A12

### USC struggles on line of scrimmage

While major colleges favor recruiting through transfer portal, linemen require more time together to jell. **SPORTS**, B10

### Music turmoil no shock to activist

Former child star Alexa Nikolas reflects on the industry's recent wave of abuse claims and lawsuits. **CALENDAR**, E1

**Weather**  
Mostly sunny.  
L.A. Basin: 80/54. **B6**



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