

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



Janelle Chaix puts on her lanyards before heading to work Jan. 19 in Crystal Lake. Chaix is a paraprofessional at South Elementary School and works in a self-contained classroom with high-needs students. **STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Attack may be result of error

GIs possibly mistook an enemy drone for American one in area

By Lolita C. Baldor, Aamer Madhani and Zeke Miller
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces may have mistaken an enemy drone for an American one and let it pass unchallenged into a desert base in Jordan where it killed three U.S. troops and wounded dozens more, officials said Monday.

Details of the Sunday attack emerged as President Joe Biden faced a difficult balancing act: blaming Iran and looking to strike back in a forceful way without causing any further escalation of the Gaza conflict.

As the enemy drone was flying in at a low altitude, a U.S. drone was returning to the small installation known as Tower 22, according to a preliminary report cited by two officials who were not authorized to comment and insisted on anonymity.

As a result, there was no effort to shoot down the enemy drone that hit the outpost. One of the trailers where troops sleep sustained the brunt of the strike, while surrounding trailers got limited damage from the blast and flying debris.

Aside from the soldiers killed, the Pentagon said more than 40 troops were wounded in the attack, most with cuts, bruises, brain injuries and similar wounds. Eight were medically evacuated, including three who were going to Landstuhl

Turn to Drone, Page 5

‘A SLAP IN THE FACE’

Crystal Lake Association of Support Staff, representing paraprofessionals in D47, files unfair labor practice charge after district retains firm to hire temp employees

By Zareen Syed | Chicago Tribune

For \$17.88 an hour, Janelle Chaix changes diapers, helps with homework, provides both practical and emotional support — and gets scratched and spit on every so often.

“That’s part of my job,” said Chaix, a paraprofessional, or aide, at Crystal Lake District 47 who works with some students who have autism and are nonverbal. “They can lash out in different ways and as a ‘para’ with these kids, you have to understand them. We don’t have the help. We don’t have the resources to give them the one-on-one they need or the consistency.”

Crystal Lake Association of Support Staff, or CLASS, the union representing Chaix and more than 100 paraprofessionals across 12 schools in District 47, filed an unfair labor practice charge with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board in October after district administrators retained a recruiting firm to hire temporary employees. The union said the move was made

illegally and without giving them notice.

“It’s a slap in the face and goes to show how much they don’t value the current employees they already have,” said Stephanie Lierance, union president and a learning resource paraprofessional at South Elementary. “Instead of coming up with thoughtful, long-term solutions to address these issues, the district waited until the last minute to bring in temporary help who aren’t committed to our students and our community — apparently they don’t have money to pay us, but they do have money to pay a contracted company.”

Sunbelt Staffing, the agency tapped by District 47, will earn up to \$65 for every hour a temporary employee works, according to a contract obtained by the Tribune. The union said the rate is more than four times as much as newly hired, permanent paraprofessionals make.

Chaix, who started as a lunchroom supervisor and is now in her fourth year as a paraprofessional at South Elementary, is one of hundreds of “paras” at the McHenry County district, many of whom report being

Turn to Labor, Page 4

Chicagoan arrested in \$400M ‘SIM swap’

Massive scheme allegedly siphoned funds from company’s cryptocurrency accounts

By Jason Meisner
Chicago Tribune

A Chicago man has been arrested on federal charges filed in Washington, D.C., alleging he participated in a sophisticated “SIM swap” scheme that allegedly siphoned \$400 million in virtual currency from a single company and millions more from other individual victims.

Robert Powell was arrested quietly last week and made an initial appearance at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago, where prosecutors moved to have him held without bond pending transfer to U.S. District Court in Washington, court records show.

A detention hearing for Powell is currently set for Friday in Chicago before U.S. Magistrate Judge Heather McShain.

Powell’s Chicago-based attorney, Gal Pissetzky, declined to

comment on the case Monday.

Powell was among three defendants charged in an indictment filed under seal in Washington with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft.

Also charged was Carter Rohn, 24, of Indianapolis, and Emily Hernandez, 23, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, records show. They were both arrested last week and have made initial appearances in federal court in their home districts.

SIM swapping is a technique in which attackers gain control of a telephone number by having it reassigned to a new device. Such attacks represent a growing security threat for government agencies and corporations because they can target not only finances but manipulate social media accounts to spread

Turn to Arrested, Page 2



Migrants congregate outside a shelter Monday on West Walnut Street. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Johnson postpones shelter eviction dates until March

Council set to discuss conditions for migrants

By A.D. Quig, Jake Sheridan and Olivia Stevens
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson preempted an outcry from migrants and their supporters Monday, announcing he would not enforce a looming Thursday deadline to start kicking recent arrivals out of city-run shelters.

On the eve of a Chicago City Council hearing called to probe conditions at the city’s migrant landing zone and shelters and days before thousands were scheduled to be evicted from the shelters, Johnson said that move would be put off again.

“We have made the decision to extend the shelter stay policy based on original exit dates from mid-January through the end of March,” Johnson said at a City Hall news conference.

The mayor has held off enact-

ing his controversial deadlines for weeks as Chicago has suffered through a long stretch of wet, cold weather.

Migrants who originally had an exit date between Jan. 16 and Feb. 29 will be given a 60-day extension starting from their original exit date, according to Brandie Knazze, head of the city’s Department of Family and Support Services. If an individual was scheduled to leave Jan. 16, for

Turn to Shelters, Page 4

Medical residents and fellows vote to unionize

A majority of residents and fellows for Northwestern Medicine voted to unionize, making them the biggest union of medical house staff in the Midwest. **Business**

Israel alleges UN workers raided with Hamas

An Israeli document obtained Monday spelled out allegations against a dozen U.N. employees the country says took part in Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack. **Nation & World**

TODAY’S WEATHER



High **40** Low **32**

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 16

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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