

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

US troops killed by drone in Jordan

Biden to strike back; Israel reports 'gaps' in talks on cease-fire

By Zeke Miller and Lolita C. Baldor
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — President Joe Biden said Sunday that the U.S. "shall respond" after three American troops were killed and dozens were injured in an overnight drone

strike in northeast Jordan near the Syria border.

Biden blamed Iran-backed militias for the first U.S. fatalities after months of strikes by such groups against American forces across the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war.

Biden, who was traveling in South Carolina, asked for a moment of silence during an appearance at a Baptist church's banquet hall.

"We had a tough day last night

in the Middle East. We lost three brave souls in an attack on one of our bases," he said. After the moment of silence, Biden said: "And we shall respond."

With an increasing risk of escalation in the region, U.S. officials were working to identify the precise group responsible for the attack, but they have assessed that one of several Iranian-backed groups was behind it.

In the Israel-Hamas war on Sunday, Israel said "significant

gaps" remain after cease-fire talks with the United States, Qatar and Egypt but called them constructive and said they would continue in the week ahead, a tentative sign of progress on a potential agreement that could see Israel pause military operations against Hamas in exchange for the release of remaining hostages. The statement from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office on the cease-fire talks did not detail the "significant gaps." There was

no immediate statement from the other parties.

Since the war in Gaza began Oct. 7, Iranian-backed militias have used a mix of drones, rockets, mortars and ballistic missiles to strike American military installations in Iraq more than 60 times and in Syria more than 90 times.

The attack Sunday was the first targeting American troops in Jordan during the Israel-Hamas

Turn to Attack, Page 9

Courts see influx of detention appeals

'Dramatic increase' comes after elimination of cash bail in Illinois

By Madeline Buckley
Chicago Tribune

In October in Livingston County, Judge Jennifer Bauknecht issued a lengthy decision following a detention hearing just weeks after cash bail was abolished across the state.

"All right. Since its founding, this country has used monetary bonds in conjunction with pretrial conditions as an effective tool for ensuring that a defendant is not a risk of harm to others in the community, does not commit any criminal offenses while out on bond, and that he appears as directed at all future court dates," Bauknecht began.

She told the defendant, charged with soliciting a child, that prior to the Pretrial Fairness Act, the landmark legislation that took effect in September, she would have "given the defendant a reasonable monetary bond," according to an appeals court decision. But without that discretion, she said, she ordered him detained.

An Illinois appeals court vacated her decision, finding that the court "improperly focused on its 'disdain' for the recent statutory changes."

The pretrial appeal of Bauknecht's decision is among hundreds filed since the legislation took effect. The opinions offer glimpses at how the new legislation is playing out across the state and clarify untested portions of the statute, but the appeals have come in such a volume that the state's highest court has convened a task force to examine what it called a "dramatic increase" in the number of cases sent to appellate courts.

From Sept. 18, when the law took effect, through the end of the year, more than 1,300 pretrial appeals of detention decisions were filed in the state's five appellate districts, an increase that comes on top of the normal caseload.

In all of 2022, there were 1,981 criminal appeals filed across all five districts, according to data from the court.

Stakeholders point out that

Turn to Courts, Page 5

Super Bowl matchup set: Chiefs vs. 49ers

The 49ers came back from a 17-point halftime deficit to beat the Lions for the NFC championship, while the Chiefs topped the Ravens to win the AFC and advance to the Super Bowl for the fourth time in five years. **Chicago Sports**

House GOP moves to impeach DHS chief

House Republicans released two articles of impeachment against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas over what they call his failure to manage the U.S.-Mexico border. **Nation & World**



ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Joliet shooting victims remembered

Family, friends and members of the community attend a vigil Sunday for seven people killed in two shootings in the same block a week earlier in Joliet. Police say suspect Romeo Nance, 23, the son, brother and nephew of the seven killed, also shot two other men in Will County, killing one, and later took his own life in Texas while being pursued by U.S. marshals. **Chicagoland, Page 3**



Kevin Herrera, right, legal director at Raise the Floor Alliance, speaks with Lorena Prieto on Dec. 15 as the Chicago Workers Collaborative screens workers in the country illegally to see if they are eligible to apply for a program that provides work permits. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Federal program has provided protection for some migrants

Workers who revealed labor abuses still face an uncertain future

By Laura Rodríguez Presa
Chicago Tribune

For most of his life in the United States, Pedro Manzanares, 53, had lived a discreet life in Chicago's Little Village, one of the city's vibrant Mexican immigrant neighborhoods.

He had declined to denounce the working conditions at El

Milagro — one of the nation's most popular tortilla factories, which was fined by the state in 2022 for "flagrant violations" of state labor law and is still under investigation by the city — fearing retaliation or even deportation despite his nearly 20 years at the company.

The back pain from carrying the heavy boxes full of tortillas was unbearable, he said, but the machines did not slow down and he couldn't afford to lose his packaging job.

But everything changed for Manzanares after several of

his co-workers fell gravely ill and died during the COVID-19 pandemic. He blames their deaths on what he believes were unsafe working conditions, such as working without personal protective equipment or sick days.

In summer 2021, Manzanares decided to speak up, even though he knew coming forward could jeopardize his future in the United States. He helped organize his co-workers, most living in the country illegally, to

Turn to Workers, Page 2

Residents: Still no clear plan on toxins

City report raised concerns about water safety in Brighton Park

By Samantha Moilanen
Chicago Tribune

Almost two months after the city released an environmental report revealing elevated levels of harmful toxins at a proposed migrant camp on 38th Street and California Avenue, residents said city officials have yet to provide a clear plan to address their escalating concerns about water safety in Brighton Park.

"The city knows that there's lead in the water, and they're allowing these residents just to continue to drink it when there are steps we can take until we replace the water lines," said Richard Zupkus, a licensed sewer specialist who lives directly behind the contaminated lot on 38th Street.

Brighton Park community leaders began holding monthly meetings at The Church of God, a global nondenominational church on 38th Street, after the city's plan to house migrants in the neighborhood fell through.

At the most recent community meeting, Paul Adamczyk, who also lives near the contaminated lot, said residents have not received lead testing kits, and

Turn to Toxins, Page 5

