

Waiting game for families of Thai hostages

As the names of those freed are revealed, a mother wonders if her farmworker daughter is among them.

By Max Kim and Marcus Yam

BAN HAET, Thailand — For 35-year-old Nutthawaree Munkan, Israel was supposed to be the coda of a long journey to pay off her debts — and to allow her family to truly begin living.

Putting her young son and daughter in their grandmother's care, Nutthawaree, a single mother, first left her home in northeastern Thailand more than a decade ago to work in Australia. She eventually landed at a fruit packing factory in Israel, less than two miles from the Gaza border.

On Oct. 7, with a little more than a year left in her five-year, three-month contract, Hamas militants attacked southern Israel, killing about 1,200 people and kidnapping about 240. Nutthawaree was one of 26 Thai nationals — and the only Thai woman — taken hostage.

"We've never been together as a family and we were looking forward to that," said her mother, 56-year-old Boonyarin Srichan.

After her daughter's abduction, Thai government officials visited Boonyarin at the family's rice farm in northeastern Thailand to take a sample of her DNA to match against the 34 Thai nationals who had been killed in the attack. They offered words of comfort before they left.

But in the weeks since, anxiety has filled the family's home, a modest one-story house encircled by a blue concrete wall and mango and papaya trees.

[See Thailand, A4]



OHAD ZWIGENBERG Associated Press

A HELICOPTER carrying hostages released by Hamas lands at Schneider Children's Medical Center in Petah Tikva, Israel, on Friday.

ANALYSIS

War pauses, but chasm remains



MOSTAFA ALKHAROUF Anadolu Agency

MARAH BAKR, left, a Palestinian detained in Israeli prison for eight years, is welcomed by family in Jerusalem after being released amid the temporary truce.

As hostage-prisoner swaps occur amid truce, Israel vows to press on

By Nabih Bulos, Tracy Wilkinson and Laura King

JERUSALEM — Tearful family reunions, aid trucks rumbling into the devastated Gaza Strip, the roar of bombardment abruptly going silent: Friday's pause in hostilities and a dramatic but limited hostage-prisoner exchange marked a major breakthrough in nearly seven weeks of bloody warfare between Israel and Hamas.

But the hard-won hiatus, intended to last for three more days, posed new dilemmas for the warring parties and their backers, did little to remove the catastrophic specter of ongoing battle, and could presage

immense new hardships for Palestinian civilians in battered Gaza.

Israel vows that the war will continue, and has shown no sign of relenting in its determination to destroy Hamas, whose fighters surged across the Gaza frontier on Oct. 7 and killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel, seizing an estimated 240 others as captives.

That triggered retaliatory Israeli airstrikes that laid waste to much of the narrow coastal enclave, killing more than 13,000 Palestinians, by the count of local health officials.

For traumatized Gaza residents, one of the more obvious signs the truce had taken hold was unfamiliar silence in the skies overhead.

[See Truce, A5]

Inflation pressure fuels Black Friday

Shoppers flock to stores for deals after months of high prices. Many lean on savings or plan to pay later.

By Carly Olson, Angie Orellana Hernandez, Defne Karabatür and Ashley Ahn

Months of punishing inflation have pushed East Hollywood resident Diane Roque to economize by canceling her family's cable subscription and prioritizing cooking at home. Now high prices are making her take a more economical approach to her holiday shopping.

For Roque, Black Friday shopping is a 12-year tradition, and she was out at the Glendale Galleria navigating the crowds with her husband and two daughters in tow. This year, she said, she told her daughters: "If you want to buy something, here's the budget for it. Anything else, no."

"One has to be smarter in making choices — weighing things from the needs and the wants and what's worth spending your money on," said Roque, 37.

Although the day's annual frenzied mall mobs had faded even before the pandemic with the growth of e-commerce and ever-earlier holiday promotions, shoppers hungry for deals after months of inflation's relentless squeeze hit retailers in force Friday, particularly at lower-priced spots such as outlet malls and discount stores.

At Walmart in Burbank, around 70 people were in line five minutes before Friday's 6 a.m. opening. Once doors opened, the store's security slowly ushered shoppers in, a few people at a time, irritating some in line who were eager to snap up specials before they were sold out.

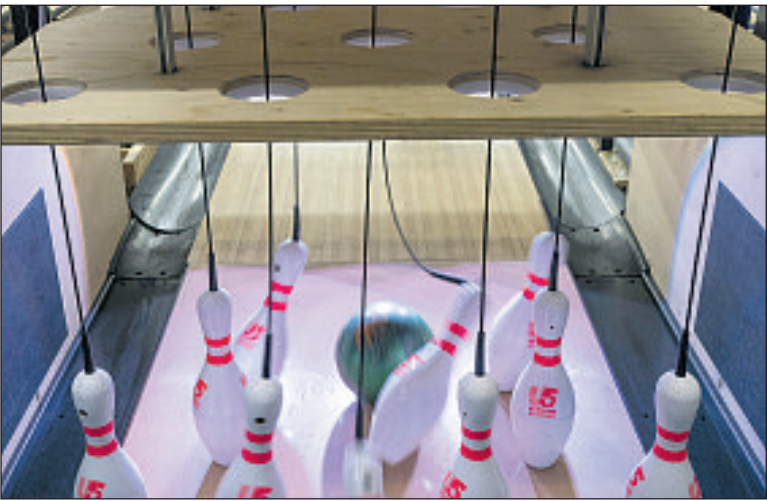
By 9 a.m., the Citadel Outlets in Commerce were jam-packed. Some pushed strollers that doubled as shopping carts, while others lugged suitcases.

Long Beach resident Rosa Acevedo, 33, limited [See Black Friday, A7]

COLUMN ONE

Tech strikes the simple game of bowling

Pinsetters that use string? Some players aren't sparing their disdain.



LOREN ELLIOTT For The Times

FAMILY-RUN Napa Bowl in Northern California spent nearly \$1 million to convert from mechanical pinsetters to string ones.

Killer Pistorius granted parole

South African double-amputee Olympic runner will be released 10 years after fatally shooting girlfriend. **WORLD, A5**

Ruling upheld on reporter's notes

Appellate court's decision stemming from a jailhouse interview is a threat to press freedom, some say. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Debunking myths of Social Security

Would-be journalists who fail to research the topic are its worst enemy, Michael Hiltzik writes. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 71/47. **B8**



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