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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023 • \$3

In Gaza, a hospital swarmed by troops

Rights groups alarmed as IDF raid all but severs al-Shifa's links to outside

BY MIRIAM BERGER,
SARAH DADOUGH,
HANNAH ALLAM
AND HAJAR HARB

JERUSALEM — Israeli tanks surrounded the Gaza Strip's largest hospital Wednesday as troops launched their long-anticipated raid in pursuit of the Hamas militants they accuse of operating a warren of tunnels under the facility.

The forces streamed into the facility before dawn, all but severing outside communication with the patients, medical staff and displaced families trapped in al-Shifa Hospital by the day of fighting outside. By the end of the day, the tanks had withdrawn but troops remained inside the compound, Israel Defense Forces and hospital staff said.

Israeli officials, who for weeks
SEE GAZA ON A11

U.S., China move to reopen military ties



KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a bilateral meeting Wednesday in Woodside, Calif. Beyond committing to move toward reopening military channels, the two also agreed to strengthen counternarcotics cooperation amid a fentanyl crisis.

DEAL STRUCK AS BIDEN AND XI MEET

Rare moment of accord between superpowers

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB
AND JOHN HUDSON

SAN FRANCISCO — President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed on Wednesday to restore communications between their two countries' militaries after they met face-to-face for the first time in a year, lowering tensions between the two superpowers at a time when the White House is struggling to manage two wars in Europe and the Middle East.

The agreement aims to reestablish key military channels more than a year after Beijing severed them in a burst of anger over then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022. Biden and Xi also agreed to strengthen counternarcotics cooperation in the hopes of lessening the United States' fentanyl crisis. Though modest in scope, the two agreements are a rare sign of cooperation between the

SEE BIDEN ON A9

'Old friends': Xi invites to dinner Iowa farmers he met years ago. A10

Complex is 'beating heart' of Hamas command, Israel says

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK
AND MEG KELLY

JERUSALEM — Rarely has a military operation against a major hospital been telegraphed so clearly.

Israeli officials have been asserting for weeks, while offering little public evidence, that the Hamas militant group has a command center below Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital — a refuge for thousands of terrified patients, overworked doctors and displaced civilians — making it a legitimate military target.

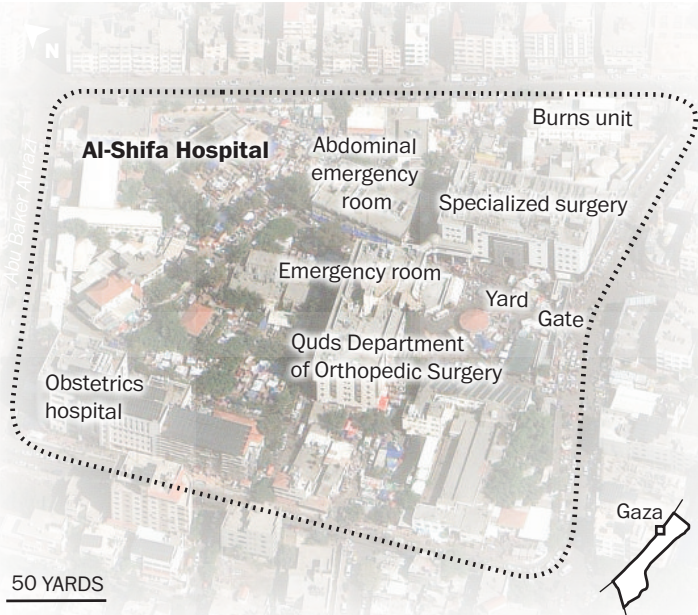
On Tuesday night, hours after U.S. officials backed Israel's claims about militant activity at Shifa, Israeli troops raided the complex in what the military described as "a precise and targeted operation against Hamas in

a specified area." Soldiers moved past the emergency room and through the cardiology unit, staff said, as gunshots rang out and doctors spluttered through the smoke.

The late-night operation was the culmination of weeks of messaging from Israeli officials about alleged Hamas infiltration of hospitals in Gaza. Across dozens of news conferences and media interviews, Israeli officials have repeatedly made the case that medical facilities are being used for military purposes, and that Shifa specifically is the "beating heart" of the group's command infrastructure in northern Gaza.

Much about the raid on Shifa — and the extent to which it has corroborated those claims — remains unclear.

SEE HOSPITALS ON A11



Note: Image captured by Maxar Technologies on Oct. 19
Source: Maxar Technologies/Reuters

Test for Biden: Gaza hostage crisis is unlike any other, experts say. A12

Maryland school: A teacher is in hot water over posts about Israel. B1

Tentative deal would release dozens of hostages in Gaza

BY KAREN DEYOUNG

Hamas has agreed in principle and Israel is now considering a proposal for the release of at least 50 women and children among about 240 foreign and Israeli hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza, according to an Arab diplomat familiar with the negotiations.

In exchange for the hostages, Israel would agree to a three-to-five-day pause "in place" in the fighting, increased humanitarian aid to Gaza, and the release of an unspecified number of women and children held in Israeli prisons.

Amid reports that agreement on at least some components of a deal may be near, U.S. officials and other interested parties spent much of Wednesday awaiting

word from Israel, where internal discussions were said to be underway. President Biden, speaking Wednesday in a news conference after his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, said that he was "deeply involved" in negotiations over a hostage release with Israel and the government of Qatar, which is serving as a go-between for Hamas.

"I am mildly hopeful," Biden said. In response to a question, he said he was not considering any U.S. military involvement in rescuing the captives. Instead, Biden said he was "working on how I can be helpful in getting the hostages released and have a period of time where there's a pause long enough to let that happen."

The Arab diplomat and others familiar with the talks, all of
SEE HOSTAGES ON A12

Food industry warned on paid influencer posts

Regulators say groups, dietitians failed to clearly disclose ads' provenance

BY CAITLIN GILBERT,
SASHA CHAVKIN
AND ANAHAD O'CONNOR

Federal regulators announced warnings against two major food and beverage industry groups and a dozen nutrition influencers Wednesday, as part of a broad action to enforce stricter standards for how companies and social media creators disclose paid advertising.

The Federal Trade Commission sent warning letters Monday to the American Beverage Association, a lobbying group whose members include Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, as well as the Canadian Sugar Institute and the health influencers who collectively have over 6 million followers on Tik-

Tok and Instagram. The agency flagged nearly three dozen social media posts that it said failed to clearly disclose who was paying the influencers to promote artificial sweeteners or sugary foods.

The crackdown, which represents more aggressive enforcement of the FTC's rules, signals that the agency seeks to set a new precedent for holding both influencers and industry accountable for social media marketing campaigns that fail to make clear who is funding them. The action also could dramatically change the social media feeds of popular influencers who now often rely on vague hashtags such as #ad or #sponsored rather than clearly naming the brand or company paying them.

The action follows a months-long investigation by The Washington Post and the Examination, a nonprofit newsroom that focuses on global health reporting, that revealed how the food and beverage industry had enlisted

SEE ADVERTISING ON A14

New CDC director is driven to mend broken trust

After agency's miscues during pandemic, Cohen moves decisively amid deep public, political divisions

BY LENA H. SUN
AND DAN DIAMOND

ATLANTA — The new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had spent days on television and social media urging Americans to get the updated coronavirus vaccine. The new shot is the most effective protection for the looming virus season, she said. And it's free.

But by the afternoon of Sept. 21, it was becoming clear to Mandy Cohen that the nine-day-old vaccine rollout was stumbling, with many Americans unable to promptly get shots at pharmacies, insurers making erroneous claims about who would have to pay, and little explanation from the government.

Cohen ducked into a small basement conference room at the embattled agency's headquarters for an update. Across the table, Nirav Shah, the CDC's principal deputy director, laid out several insurance and supply chain issues. The federal government was

SEE COHEN ON A4



ALYSSA POINTER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Mandy Cohen at a September health-care conference in Atlanta. The agency has become a target in Congress and on the campaign trail.

IN THE NEWS

Supreme Court ethics code The rules that the justices announced this week left lots of wiggle room for permissible conduct — and no means of enforcement. A6

Contract in jeopardy A tentative agreement between UAW and General Motors is in peril after five plants voted in opposition. A15

THE NATION Hunter Biden's attorneys in his gun case are seeking a subpoena for Donald Trump. A3
Univision, the Spanish-language news giant, has warmed to Trump since 2020. A6

THE WORLD A year after the liberation of Ukraine's Kherson, Russian bombs still rain down. A8
Britain's top court rejected the government's plan to deport migrants to Rwanda. A10

THE ECONOMY The media giant Gannett instituted policies to diversify its staff. Now White workers are filing a class-action lawsuit. A13
FAA experts said understaffing and outdated technology are threatening aviation safety. A15

THE REGION The Virginia teacher shot by a first-grader delivered an impact statement as the boy's mother was sentenced on gun charges. B1
Virginia Senate Democrats have chosen Sen. Scott A. Surovell (Fairfax) to serve as majority leader. B1

STYLE Beyond changing dining habits and rising costs, restaurateurs have another struggle on their plate: crime. C1
LOCAL LIVING Author Chris Bohjalian details how his dog Jesse taught him to fall in love with the forest.

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