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WAR WITH IRAN

Trump says he will help pick next leader



A damaged building is seen March 5 after an Israeli strike in Choueifat, Lebanon, amid renewed hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. AHMAD AL KERDI/REUTERS

U.N. human rights group condemns strikes

Michael Loria, Bart Jansen and Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump spoke in favor of a boots-on-the-ground attack on Iran by regional Kurdish forces and said he would take a role in choosing Iran's next leader.

"We want to be involved in the process of choosing the person who is going to lead Iran into the future," Trump said in an interview with Reuters on March 5.

Iranian Kurdish militias were training near the Iran-Iraq border for a pos-



The price of oil and gas has surged since the attacks on Iran began. JACK TAYLOR/REUTERS

sible incursion to weaken Iranian ground forces – and provide cover for a popular uprising that Trump has long called for in Iran – and had consulted with the United States, Reuters reported.

"I think it's wonderful that they want to do that, I'd be all for it," Trump told the news agency.

Meanwhile, U.S. and Israeli jets hunted for Iranian missile launchers as European allies moved fighters and other assets to help defend Persian Gulf nations against an onslaught of retaliatory drones and missiles.

Asked about an offer of support from Ukraine to help defend against Iranian drones, Trump told Reuters:

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Revised bridge project praised

Some raise concerns, but contracts are OK'd

Colleen Wilson

NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Amid jubilation at the news of Gov. Mikie Sherrill's decision to scale back the controversial Newark Bay Bridge project, others voiced concern about pollution, traffic and how congestion would be handled with a one-span solution.

Hudson County residents, environmentalists and politicians weighed in on the sudden decision to downsize construction of the new bridge to a one-span, four-lane structure with shoulders, instead of the original plans to double the number of lanes with a two-span crossing.

Sherrill's announcement came on Tuesday, March 3, a day before the Turnpike Authority board voted on the first three contracts for what is now a \$6.7 billion, multi-project program, down from \$10.7 billion.

"I have lived in Bayonne for over 25 years and I drive, I bike, take transit, and today I'm just really happy," Miso Dko said during the public speaker portion of the Turnpike Authority's rescheduled monthly meeting on March 4. "We were never going to solve traffic with more traffic."

John Reichman of EmpowerNJ, an environmental coalition, called Sherrill's decision "wise, bold and courageous."

"It will save billions of dollars; it will provide funds for transit; it will provide for cleaner air and stop a seriously flawed project that would have made traffic worse," Reichman said.

Lina Drillman, a 67-year-old Bayonne resident, called in to the meeting to thank the governor for scaling back the project but is still concerned about pollution.

"Every day in my walk from where I live on 27th Street uptown toward the direction of the bridge – right where Marist High School was taken down – the air quality there is extremely poor," she said, asking whether a wall could be erected. "I never realized how much the building there prevented the air, which is the exhaust from the vehicles going over the bridge coming into Bayonne."

Joseph Skillender Jr., a Bayonne resident and director of the city's Department of Planning, Zoning and Development, said he is concerned about how traffic will be managed now that there's a new UPS facility, where 100,000 packages move an hour, as well as terminal expansion plans at Port Liberty Bayonne and the new Paramount film studio, expected to bring 3,000 new jobs.

"The trucks are going to stall on the bridge. The congestion that is

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Mideast crisis could cause hike in heating, electric bills

Daniel Munoz

NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

A protracted war with Iran could raise the cost of liquefied natural gas, and therefore home heating and electric prices in New Jersey, analysts are saying, though the conflict's impact isn't as clear-cut or intuitive as it is

with gas prices at the pump.

The United States and Israel jointly struck Iran last weekend, killing Iran's supreme leader and dozens of other officials.

The death toll includes 787 Iranian civilians, including 165 schoolgirls and staff killed in missile strikes, Reuters reported, plus dozens killed in Israel, Lebanon, Bahrain and Kuwait. Six U.S.

service members have also been killed.

Iran has responded by launching repeated barrages of missiles at U.S. military bases across the Middle East.

As with oil, the conflict has stalled the movement of liquefied natural gas through the region.

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