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FINAL

MIDEAST CEASEFIRE

A TIME FOR HEALING

ISRAELI HOSTAGES, PALESTINIAN PRISONERS FREED, BUT COMPLEX ISSUES REMAIN FOR ISRAEL-HAMAS AGREEMENT



President Donald Trump delivers a speech Monday at the Gaza International Peace Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Yoan Valat/Pool photo via AP



Freed Palestinian prisoners are greeted Monday as they arrive in the Gaza Strip after their release from Israeli jails under a ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip. Jehad Alshrafi/Associated Press

By Michelle L. Price
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On Monday, the fragile ceasefire in Gaza led to freedom for Israeli hostages and the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. It was the culmination of a long and tortuous process — but it may, in the end, have been the easier part.

The coming weeks, months and years will require more than just rebuilding from the devastation that has left much of Gaza in ruins. Key details of the peace plan may remain unsettled. Granular details will need to be negotiated to keep the plan moving forward and prevent the resumption of fighting. The path to long-term peace, stabil-

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Fetterman, Lee reactions to ceasefire highlight division, **A-7**

ity and eventual rebuilding will be a long and very precipitous route.

“The first steps to peace are always the hardest,” President Donald Trump said as he stood with foreign leaders in Egypt on Monday for a summit on Gaza’s future. He hailed the ceasefire deal he brokered between Israel and Hamas as the end of the war in Gaza — and start of rebuilding the devastated territory.

And while Trump expressed optimism that the most

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STATE BUDGET

Impasse triggers layoffs in counties

Westmoreland furloughs 125 workers, seeks loan

By Ford Turner
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Westmoreland County, which will furlough 125 of its 1,600 employees on Tuesday because of the state budget debacle, is one of six Pennsylvania counties in the process of seeking a loan under a new program run by state Treasurer Stacy Garrity, according to county and treasury officials.

Billions of dollars in state payments to counties and other organizations have stopped flowing because political leaders in Harrisburg have been unable to agree on a budget for a 2025-26 fiscal year that is now 105 days old.

Besides the six counties, other entities that are in the process of seeking loans under the program include 39 Pre-K counts programs, 15 Head Start programs and two rape crisis and domestic violence centers, according to Deputy Treasurer for Communications Steve Chizmar.

But some Democrats in the Legislature have said Ms. Garrity — a Republican and her party’s endorsed candidate in next

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Interim coach: Been there, done that

Smith understands dynamics at Penn State

By Mike White
For the Post-Gazette

It wasn’t exactly like the firing of James Franklin, but Penn State’s new interim football coach knows what it’s like to be pushed out of a job.

Penn State named Terry Smith interim coach Sunday, putting in charge a man who was once a standout player in the WPIAL and cut his coaching teeth at Gateway High School in Monroeville. Mr. Smith, promoted from Penn State’s associate head coach, was Gateway’s coach for 11 seasons from 2002-12. He enjoyed huge success, bringing glory back to a once-prominent program that had begun a downward slide. Mr. Smith was 101-30 in his 11 seasons, won seven conference titles and made it to a WPIAL title game four times.



Smith

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Zeise: Franklin deserved a shot to right the ship, **B-1**

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Hostage from Pittsburgh’s ‘sister city’ released

By Lindsay Shachnow
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A yellow piano has stood in the Palm Court of the Jewish Community Center in Squirrel Hill for months.

“You are not alone,” a sign reads.

The piano is a tribute to Alon Ohel, a talented pianist abducted by Hamas during the Nova music festival in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Shortly after Mr. Ohel was kidnapped, his mother installed a yellow piano in Tel Aviv’s hostage square.

Cities around the world followed suit — including Pittsburgh.

Mr. Ohel’s mother was encouraging people to play the piano as a way

to reach him and send positive vibes while he was in captivity.

Two years later, he and the remaining 19 other living hostages taken by Hamas were released on Monday, along with hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel as part of a ceasefire deal.

Kim Salzman, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh’s Israel and overseas director who lives in the same region as Mr. Ohel, said it was a “really emotional day.”

“It has brought tears to almost every Israeli and to every Jew around the world because we wouldn’t be complete until all of the hostages are home,” Ms. Salzman told the

SEE **OHEL**, PAGE A-8



Freed Israeli hostage Alon Ohel gestures from a van as he arrives Monday at Beilinson hospital in Petah Tikva, Israel, after he was released from Hamas captivity in the Gaza Strip. Ariel Schalit/Associated Press



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Pleasant with sunshine.
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