

Trump heads to Israel, Egypt to mark US-brokered ceasefire deal

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE, AAMER MADHANI AND JOSEPH KRAUSS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump set off for Israel and Egypt on Sunday to celebrate the U.S.-brokered ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas and urge Middle East allies to seize the opportunity

to build a durable peace in the volatile region. It's a fragile moment with Israel and Hamas only in the early stages of implementing the first phase of the Trump agreement designed to bring a permanent end to the war sparked by the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas-led militants. Trump thinks there is a narrow window to

reshape the Mideast and reset long-fraught relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It is a moment, the Republican president says, that has been helped along by his administration's support of Israel's decimation of Iranian proxies, including Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. "Very excited about

this moment in time," Trump told reporters before Air Force One took off. He said many people in both Israel and Arab countries were "cheering" the agreement, adding that "everybody's amazed and their thrilled and we're going to have an amazing time." **See CEASEFIRE › A5**



AP PHOTO/JEHAD ALSHRAFI

Displaced Palestinians walk with their belongings past destroyed buildings as they return to their homes in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Friday after Israel and Hamas agreed to a pause in their war and the release of the remaining hostages.



Work continues on Erlanger Park on Oct. 9.

STAFF PHOTO BY MATT HAMILTON

DOUBLE PLAY

Knoxville sales tax revenue boom could bode well for Lookouts ballpark

BY DANIEL DASSOW
STAFF WRITER

A minor league baseball stadium that opened earlier this year in Knoxville is generating more sales tax revenue than officials anticipated, which could signal similar success for Chattanooga's stadium now under construction. An incentive from the state of Tennessee allows both cities to keep sales tax revenue at the multiuse venues toward paying off public debt used to build them. Crews have finished placing steel and pouring the seating bowl at Erlanger Park, the upcoming home of the Chattanooga Lookouts on a former industri-

al site between South Broad Street and Interstate 24. The \$115 million stadium is scheduled to open April 14. While the city and Hamilton County have already reserved more than \$500,000 in property taxes from South Broad developments to pay for the stadium, the venue must open before it produces sales tax from hot dogs and hoodies. That's where Covenant Health Park, where the Knoxville Smokies and One Knoxville Sporting Club soccer team play, offers a clue. The venue opened April 15 and will have generated more than \$1 million in sales tax in its inaugural season, more than developers expected, the Knox-

ville News Sentinel reported. Sales tax revenue at the Lookouts stadium will pay 20-25% or more of the largest of three bonds issued by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Sports Authority, said Jason Freier, CEO of Atlanta-based Hardball Capital, which owns the Lookouts. The team expects annual sales tax revenue of more than \$1 million at Erlanger Park. "If we have this conversation 10 months from now, I think what you will see is you'll be able to find almost nobody who thinks it was a bad idea," Freier said about the stadium in an interview. **See STADIUMS › A5**

Detainees are choosing to leave US voluntarily

BY MARTHA BELLISLE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — Ramón Rodríguez Vazquez was a farmworker for 16 years in southeast Washington state, where he and his wife of 40 years raised four children and 10 grandchildren. The 62-year-old was a part of a tight-knit community and never committed a crime. On Feb. 5, immigration officers who came to his house looking for someone else took him into custody. He was denied bond, despite letters of support from friends, family, his employer and a physician who said the family needed him. He was sent to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Tacoma, Washington, where his health rapidly declined in part because he was not always provided with his prescription medication for several medical conditions, including high blood pressure. Then there was the emotional toll of being unable to care for his family or sick granddaughter. Overwhelmed by it all, he finally gave up. At an appearance with an immigration judge, he asked to leave without a formal deportation mark on his record. The judge granted his request and he moved back to Mexico, alone. His case is an exemplar of the impact of the Trump administration's aggressive efforts to deport millions of migrants on an accelerated timetable, casting aside years of procedure and legal process in favor of expedient results. Similar dramas are playing out at immigration courts across the country, accelerating since early July, when ICE began opposing bond for anyone detained regardless of their circumstances. "He was the head of the house, everything — the one who took care of everything," said Gloria Guizar, 58, Rodríguez's wife. "Being separated from the family has been so hard. Even though our kids are grown, and we've got grandkids, everybody misses him." Leaving the country was unthinkable before he was held in a jail cell. The deportation process broke him. **See VOLUNTARILY › A6**

Shooting at packed South Carolina bar kills four

BY LEWIS LEVINE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. HELENA ISLAND, S.C. — A mass shooting early Sunday at a crowded bar on an idyllic island considered to be the largest Gullah community on the South Carolina coast has left four people dead and at least 20 injured, officials said. A large crowd was at Willie's Bar and Grill on St. Helena Island when sheriff's deputies arrived and found many people with gunshot wounds. An estimated 5,000 or more Gullah people living on the island trace their ancestry back to enslaved West Africans who once worked rice plantations

in the area before being freed by the Civil War. Bar owner Willie Turrall was inside the establishment, which was packed for a high school alumni event, when he heard shots going off "in bursts" outside. He described the scene: "Screaming and panic and fear." The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office said in a statement on social media that many people ran to nearby businesses seeking shelter from the gunfire. "This is a tragic and difficult incident for everyone," the statement said. "We ask for your patience as we continue to investigate this incident. Our thoughts are with all of the victims and their loved ones."

Among the injured, four were in critical condition at hospitals Sunday afternoon. The victims' identities were not released. Turrall said the bar was hosting an event for alumni of Battery Creek High School in Beaufort, about 10 miles northwest of St. Helena Island. He said people were having a good time when the shots were heard. "It was scary from the inside," he said, with "people not knowing what's really going on outside, people trying to get to safety." U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace posted on social media that she was "COMPLETELY HEARTBRO-

KEN to learn about the devastating shooting." Willie's Bar and Grill advertises itself as serving authentic Gullah-inspired cuisine and describes itself on its website as "not just a restaurant but a community pillar committed to giving back, especially to our youth." Smaller enclaves of Gullah, referred to as Geechee in some areas, are scattered along the Southeast coast from North Carolina to Florida. Scholars say separation from the mainland caused the Gullah to retain much of their African heritage, including a unique dialect and skills such as cast-net fishing and basket weaving.