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# Tri-City Herald



The fenced-off yard at 16 North Huntington St., former site of the Kennewick Inspire Development Centers.

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## Israel launches ground offensive in Gaza City

BY LARA JAKES, GABBY SOBELMAN, ISABEL KERSHNER AND NATAN ODENHEIMER  
NYT News Service

The Israeli military said Tuesday that it had launched a ground incursion into Gaza City overnight, embarking on a risky operation to take control of a key urban area even as hundreds of thousands of Palestinian residents remain there.

The ground operation and intensifying Israeli bombardment risks deepening the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, in a nearly two-year-long war that has already killed tens of thousands of people. Windows were felt shaking in buildings as far as 25 miles away in Israel.

"We are all terrified," said Montaser Bahja, a former schoolteacher sheltering in an apartment in western Gaza City near the coast. "Death would be more merciful than what we're living through."

The operation has been building for weeks, with Israel saying that a takeover of the city was necessary to prevent Hamas from regrouping and planning future attacks. The plans for the ground assault drew fierce international criticism and dimmed hopes for a ceasefire agreement with Hamas that many foreign officials and Israelis had pushed.

After intensifying airstrikes in recent days, on Tuesday morning the Israeli military said that three divisions of active duty and reserve troops had begun "expanded ground operations in Gaza City" over the past day to target Hamas.

More than 20 dead and doz-

SEE PRESCHOOL, 4A

SEE ISRAEL, 4A

## Preschool closes as state child care cuts hit region

BY ERIC ROSANE  
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KENNEWICK, WA

Buildings are abuzz with students heading back to school this time of year, but not at this preschool.

Instead, cobwebs and dust have settled on Inspire Devel-

opment Centers' former Kennewick school at 16 N. Huntington Street.

The 73,000-square-foot building served 82 pre-kindergarten kids before it closed its doors at the end of June.

Old Street View photos showed awnings and a covered playground outside the building. Those are gone. Today, the

site is relegated to little more than overflow parking for the casino next door. A whiteboard posted outside the entrance still reads: "Attendance Matters. Be On Time Matters."

The closure is part of a concerning trend. Early learning daycares for low-income families have begun closing their doors in the Tri-Cities in re-

sponse to cuts from lawmakers — and more closures could soon be on the horizon as costs for services and salaries rise.

Across the state, 2,000 fewer preschoolers are heading back to school this fall because of the dramatic cuts to Washington's Early Childhood Education and

## Ferguson vows suit against feds' Hanford site action

BY ANNETTE CARY  
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KENNEWICK, WASH.

Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson stood with Hanford workers, Tri-City leaders and tribal members Friday afternoon in Kennewick to say that if the Trump administration attempts to derail treatment of Hanford radioactive waste, there will be a legal challenge.

"And they will lose," Ferguson said.

son said.

He is not convinced by the most recent statement released from Energy Secretary Chris Wright on Thursday that the Department of Energy is committed to finally begin treating decades-old radioactive waste at the vitrification plant for disposal by a legal deadline next month.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said a day earlier after a phone conversation with Wright that he admitted to actively stalling

startup of waste treatment at the massive Waste Treatment Plant, or vit plant, at the Hanford nuclear site in Eastern Washington.

That conversation was "a four-alarm fire," Ferguson said.

DOE's apparent intent to pull back now from treating waste just weeks away from the plant's planned startup "makes no sense," he said.

The only reason Wright gave

SEE FERGUSON, 5A



BOB BRAWDY [bbrawdy@tricityherald.com](mailto:bbrawdy@tricityherald.com)

Wash. Gov. Bob Ferguson speaks at a news conference Friday about the Department of Energy's possible plan to delay or cancel startup of the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant next month. State, tribal and community leaders stand behind him at the TRIDEC office in Kennewick.



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