

Israel strikes risk Gaza deal Hamas accused of backtracking on fragile ceasefire pact

AFP, JERUSALEM: Israel carried out fresh air strikes on Gaza on Thursday and accused Hamas of backtracking on parts of a fragile ceasefire and hostage release deal ahead of an expected vote by its cabinet.

The truce, announced by mediators Qatar and the United States on Wednesday, would take effect on Sunday and involve the exchange of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners, after which the terms of a permanent end to the war would be finalised.

But the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Hamas had "renege[d] on parts of the agreement reached... in an effort to extort last-minute concessions".

It also said that the Israeli cabinet, which has yet to approve the agreement, "will not convene until the mediators notify Israel that Hamas has accepted all elements of the agreement".

Hamas political bureau member Sami Abu Zuhri said there was "no basis" for Israel's accusations.

In Gaza, the civil defence agency said Israel pounded several areas of the territory after the deal was announced, killing at least 75 people and wounding hundreds more.

The agreement followed months of fruitless negotiations to end the deadliest war in Gaza's



Smoke plumes rising from explosions above destroyed buildings in the northern Gaza Strip and (inset) a Palestinian woman carries the body of her son killed in an Israeli strike, in occupied West Bank, on Thursday

CONTINUING ISRAELI 'AGGRESSION' ENDANGERS HOSTAGES, WARNS HAMAS

AFP, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: Hamas's armed wing warned on Thursday that Israel's continuing air strikes and shelling in Gaza after the announcement of a ceasefire deal was risking hostages meant to be released.

"Any aggression and shelling at this stage by the enemy could turn the freedom of a prisoner into a tragedy," the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades said on Telegram, referring to the dozens of Israeli hostages held in Gaza since the October 7, 2023 attack that triggered the war.

Without offering details, Abu Obeida, spokesman for the armed wing, said an Israeli strike had hit a place where one of the women to be freed "in the first stage of the ceasefire deal was located".

Since then, Gaza's civil defence agency reported that Israel had "escalated" its strikes across the territory, reporting at least 80 killed and hundreds more wounded.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said on Thursday that its teams had recovered the bodies of five children after a strike on the northern city of Jabalia.

history and, if finalised, would pause hostilities one day before the inauguration of US Presi-

dent-elect Donald Trump. Netanyahu spoke with both US President Joe Biden and Trump on Wednesday,

the Israeli leader's office said, thanking them for their help securing the agreement but also cau-

tioning that "final details" were still being worked on.

The war was triggered by the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,210 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official Israeli figures.

During the attack, the deadliest in Israeli history, Palestinian militants also took 251 people hostage, 94 of whom are still being held in Gaza, including 34 the Israeli military says are dead.

Israel's ensuing campaign has destroyed much of Gaza, killing 46,788 people, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the UN considers reliable.

In Israel and Gaza, there were celebrations welcoming the truce deal, but also anguish.

Saeed Alloush, who lives in north Gaza, said he and his loved ones were "waiting for the truce and were happy", until overnight strikes killed his relatives.

"It was the happiest night since October 7" until "we received the news of the martyrdom of 40 people from the Alloush family", he said.

In Tel Aviv, pensioner Simon Patya said he felt "great joy" that some hostages would return alive, but also "great sorrow for those who are returning in bags, and that will be a very strong blow, morally".

Old Goa panel objects to entry fee at Monte Chapel

Save Old Goa Action Committee wants Archaeology Director to withdraw the notification with immediate effect

Team Herald

PANJIM: Taking strong objection to the notification imposing Rs 50 as entry fee to the Our Lady of Monte Chapel atop the hill, the Save Old Goa Action Committee (SOGAC) has demanded that the Director of Archaeology withdraw the same immediately.

The committee has submitted a memorandum expressing its opposition to the notification Goa Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Rules, 2024, which imposes an entry fee of Rs 50 to the Chapel.

A copy of the letter has been submitted to the Chief Minister, the Archbishop, MLA Rajesh Faldessai, Ela Old Goa Gram Panchayat and others.

The Committee has said that there is a fear that people coming for mass, prayers and weddings will have to pay an entry fee to enter the chapel area.

The SOGAC said that since there are active religious functionalities at the Chapel of Our Lady of Monte as a place of worship, with regular church services held on the 8th of every



DEVOTEES MAY NOT ATTEND SERVICES: PANEL

» SOGAC submitted a memorandum expressing its opposition to the notification

» Sent copies to CM, the Archbishop, MLA Rajesh Faldessai, Ela Old Goa Gram Panchayat and others

» Claimed no one has been taken into confidence while imposing the entry fee to the chapel

» Feared that imposing an entry fee may hinder devotees from attending services since there are active religious functionalities at the Chapel as a place of worship, with regular church services held on the 8th of every month

» Said a gate has been put up at the entry point of the chapel

month, imposing an entry fee is inconsistent with its religious use and may hinder devotees from attending services.

The committee members have said that a gate has been put up at the entry point of the chapel and a fee will be imposed on people for entering a religious place where they

come to pray.

"No one has been taken into confidence while imposing the entry fee to the chapel. Are you trying to make money by using God," asked Freddy Dias, SOGAC member.

The Committee has decided to raise the issue before the gram sabha of the Se Old Goa Panchayat.

Biden warns of oligarchy taking shape in America

PTI, WASHINGTON: Outgoing President Joe Biden has warned of a rising ultra-wealthy 'oligarchy' in America that poses a threat to the nation's democracy, as he prepared to cede power to President-elect Donald Trump.

FAREWELL SPEECH

In his farewell address to the nation, Biden also pushed for amending the Constitution to make clear that no president is immune from criminal liability – an apparent reference to Trump, 78.

In July, the Supreme Court ruled that presidents cannot be prosecuted for 'official acts' during their time in office. The court's ruling stemmed from the Justice Department's case against Trump over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.



President Joe Biden speaks from the Oval Office of the White House as he gives his farewell address, on Wednesday

“Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead

“The free press is crumbling. Editors are disappearing. Social media is giving up on fact-checking. The truth is smothered by lies, told for power and for profit. We must hold the social platforms accountable

“We need to amend the Constitution to make clear that no president is immune from crimes that he or she commits while in office.

– Joe Biden

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Tourism Director Sunil Anchipaka shunted out

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State on Thursday transferred Director of Tourism Sunil Anchipaka, IAS and posted him as Secretary to Government, with immediate effect.

Anchipaka will be the Secretary for Industries, Trade and Commerce; Handicrafts, Textile and Coir; Sports and Art and Culture.

Kedar Naik, who was Director (Administration) of Sports Authority of Goa (SAG) has been transferred and posted as Director of Tourism.

The State government on Thursday transferred 17 senior scale officers of Goa Civil Service, in public interest, with immediate effect.

Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS) Arvind Bugde has been transferred and posted as Joint Secretary, Law (Estt) while, Kabir Shirgaonkar who was awaiting posting has now been posted as RCS.

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SACRED RITUAL



The kadda puja, highlighting Goa's rich heritage, was performed in the village of Kundaim, Ponda, in the wee hours of Thursday

KEITH VAZ IN THE HOUSE

Keith Vaz calls Brexit a 'disaster' for United Kingdom

Former UK Minister stresses the need for another referendum to decide whether to reverse the decision

Team Herald

PANJIM: Keith Vaz, the former UK Member of Parliament and one of the first British MPs of Goan origin, voiced his strong opposition to Brexit, calling it a 'disaster' for the UK.

In an exclusive interview to O Heraldo, he pointed to the UK's historical strength, with its world-leading financial services, education system and health service, all of which he believes were undermined by the decision to leave the European Union. "I think Brexit has been a disaster for the United Kingdom. This is a country that should be growing stronger,



IN CONVERSATION

but Brexit has caused a massive disruption," he said. "We need another referendum to decide whether to reverse this decision," he asserted.

On the economic consequences of Brexit, Vaz noted



Former UK minister Keith Vaz during his visit to O Heraldo office, Panjim

that the UK's trade relationship with the EU, which accounted

for over half of British exports, had been severely impacted. "I

“I think Brexit has been a disaster for the United Kingdom. This is a country that should be growing stronger, but Brexit has caused a massive disruption. We need another referendum to decide whether to reverse this decision

“Under the new post-Brexit rules, Goans no longer have automatic rights to settle in the UK, even if they hold Portuguese passports. If you obtained your Portuguese passport before Brexit, you could apply for pre-settlement status. But post-Brexit, that opportunity is no longer available

– Keith Vaz, former UK Minister

was talking to a businessman who says every time he tries to export to France, he has to fill in so many forms, so many regulations," he explained.

Vaz also recalled his efforts to engage with new EU mem-

ber States, including Poland and Hungary, in the early 2000s, when he worked under Tony Blair to integrate them into the European Union.

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Let the car stay, parking is harder than the rescue!