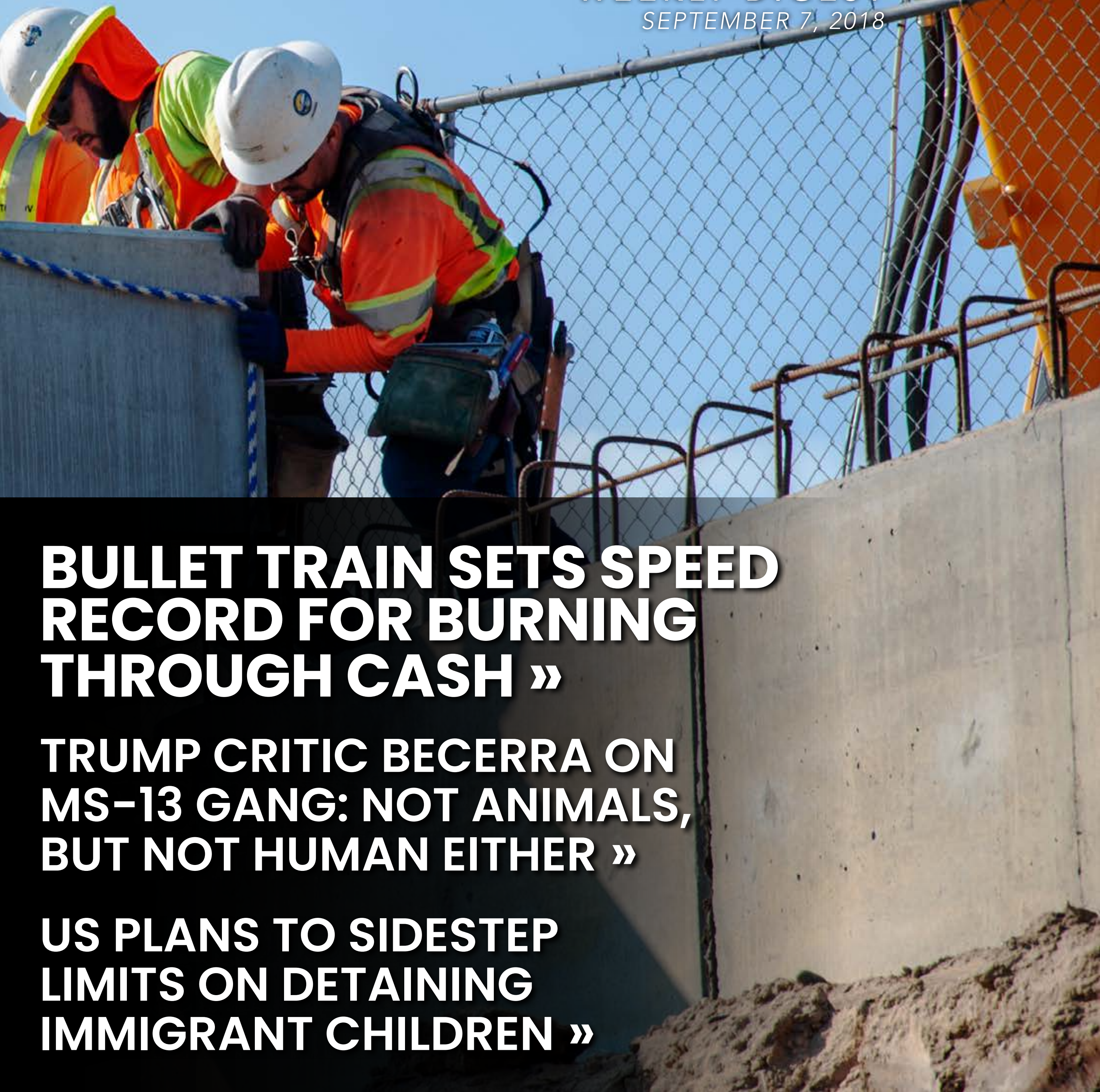




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WEEKLY DIGEST
SEPTEMBER 7, 2018



**BULLET TRAIN SETS SPEED
RECORD FOR BURNING
THROUGH CASH »**

**TRUMP CRITIC BECERRA ON
MS-13 GANG: NOT ANIMALS,
BUT NOT HUMAN EITHER »**

**US PLANS TO SIDESTEP
LIMITS ON DETAINING
IMMIGRANT CHILDREN »**



LOCAL BULLET TRAIN SETS SPEED RECORD

For Burning Through Cash

August 31, 2018 | GV Wire

Long before it's done, California's bullet train project is setting speed records. Not land speed records, mind you.

Spending records.

Ralph Vartabedian, the high-speed rail watchdog for the Los Angeles Times, reports that the project has cost state taxpayers an average \$3.1 million a day over the last year.

Spending Rate Eclipses Other Big Projects

That is "a construction spending rate higher than that

"In order to hit its 2033 deadline and \$77-billion budget, the California High-Speed Rail Authority will have to increase daily spending by up to nine times over the next four years or risk putting the already-delayed system further behind." — Ralph Vartabedian, the high-speed rail watchdog for the Los Angeles Times

for the Bay Bridge, Boston's Big Dig or any U.S. transportation project in recent history," writes Vartabedian.

As astonishing as that number is, it's nowhere close to how much taxpayer money must be spent between now and 2022 for the project to make its completion date. "In order to hit its 2033 deadline and \$77-billion budget, the California High-Speed Rail Authority will have to increase daily spending by up to nine times over the next four years or risk putting the already-delayed system further behind," Vartabedian reports. That works out to \$27 million a day.

Apollo Moon Program Comparison

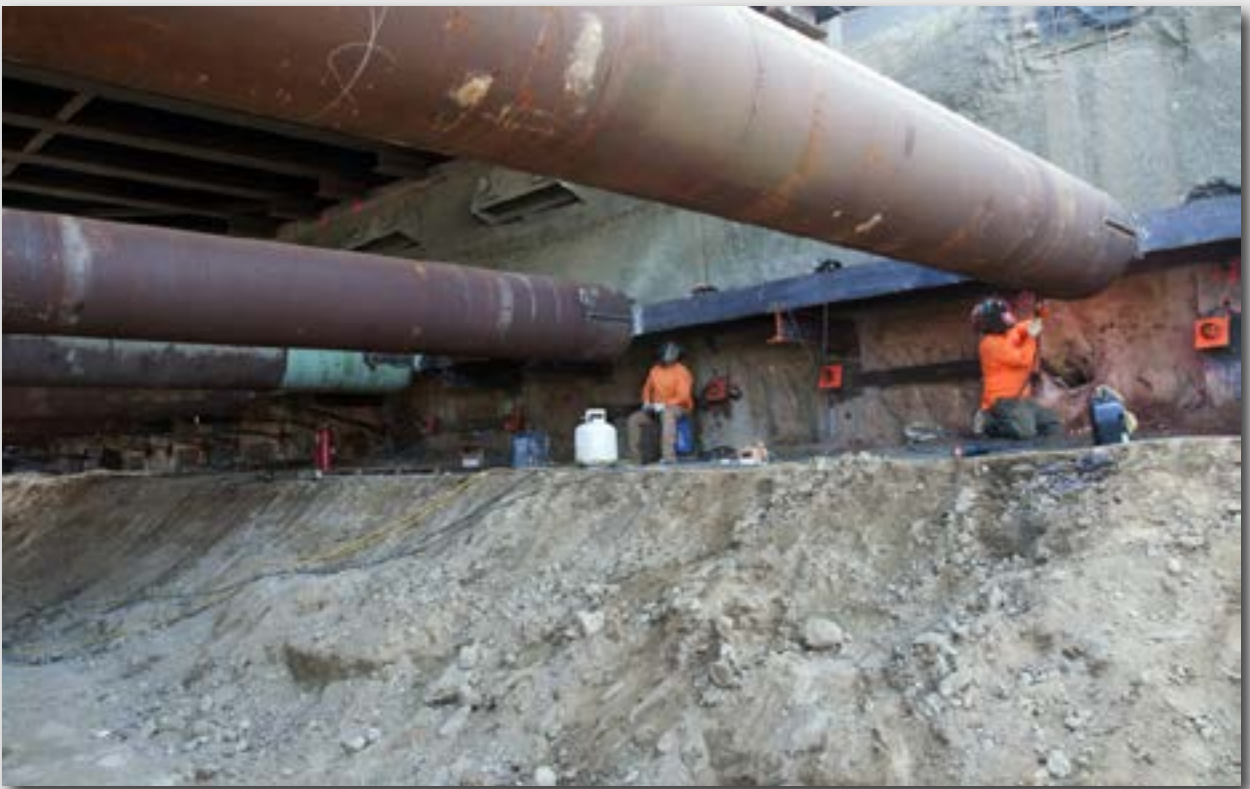
In case you're wondering, that's federal government spent about \$30 million a day during the 13 years of

the Apollo moon program. Californians, however, aren't going to the moon.

They just want an alternative to clogged freeways and busy airports for getting back and forth between the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

Read the Story, Watch the Video

- [Click here](#) to read Vartabedian's story.
- [Click here](#) to view CHSRA's August update on the project's progress in Fresno.



(CHSRA Photo)



JARRAR RETURNS TO CAMPUS SAYING SHE 'LOVES' THE FRESNO COMMUNITY

GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

September 5, 2018 | David Taub

The Fresno State professor who elicited backlash and threats of withholding donations after her controversial tweets praised Fresno upon her return to the classroom. In an entrance that resembled a Mardi Gras parade, the **controversial Randa Jarrar** arrived on campus Wednesday (Sept. 5), teaching for the first time since a medical leave of absence. During her leave, her **tweets following the death of former First Lady Barbara Bush** ignited a national controversy.

Festive Return

Friends, some wearing bunny ears and some carrying signs, escorted Jarrar to class. A university police officer also accom-

panied Jarrar. A university spokeswoman said the professor requested the police presence. A handful of protesters, led by local conservative provocateur **Ben Bergquam**, also greeted Jarrar. Jarrar taught English 103 Masterpieces of American Literature to 25 students. The officer locked the door after she entered the classroom.

Controversial Tweets While on Leave

Jarrar called Bush an amazing racist among other unflattering descriptions of the Bush family. Since those tweets, other controversial comments by Jarrar about President Trump, farmers, and **"white editors"** have emerged. Those remarks prompted...

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WILL SUPERVISORS GIVE OK TO NEW ANIMAL SHELTER WEST OF 99?

September 5, 2018 | David Taub

Fresno Humane Animal Services wants to build a new \$6 million shelter and animal hospital. It has the land. It has preliminary approvals. It is fundraising to build a first-rate operation. But some residents are against the four-acre facility, which is proposed on Grantland Avenue, between Parkway Drive, Tenaya Avenue, and Highway 99. Neighbors cite the potential for increased traffic as their top reason for opposition. The land belongs to Wesclo, LP, a corporate cousin to Derrel's Mini Storage. The company is donating the land.

The location is in unincorporated Fresno County, hence the last word belongs to the Board of Supervisors. The nonprofit shelter wants the board to rezone the area from residential to commercial use. The shelter now operates in the parking lot of the old county morgue at 760 W. Nielsen Ave. "It's miserable out here in this parking lot. If we don't get to build this..."

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Image/Fresno Humane Animal Services

BARGAIN WARP SPEED LEARNING HAS A NAME

Dual Enrollment

September 4, 2018 | Myles Barker

Education now moves at warp speed for high school students eager to put their mark on the world. Isaak Hernandez, for example, graduated from **Fresno's Design Science Early College High School** and Fresno City College at the same time.

And now he's at one of the most prestigious universities in the world: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Now, more than ever, **dual enrollment** programs in the Fresno area and across the nation make it possible for students to get a head start on college and cut tuition costs.

"The program was exactly what I expected and more," said Hernandez, who was able to complete over 60 units of college credit while attending Design Science. "If somebody wants to get the most out of their four years of high school, I would recommend dual enrollment. It is an experience like no other."

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GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello



GV Wire Photo/David Taub

STATE NOT ANIMALS, BUT NOT HUMAN EITHER

Trump Critic Becerra on MS-13 Gang

August 31, 2018 | David Taub

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra didn't quite share **President Donald Trump's sentiments** on the gang MS-13, but he came close. "When you talk about maiming human life, scaring them to the point that you don't recognize them, I don't know if you would call them human beings," Becerra said at a news conference to announce **the arrest of 25 MS-13 gang members** in an operation in Mendota.

Becerra spoke Friday (Aug. 31) at the federal courthouse in downtown Fresno, along with federal and local law enforcement officials, following a year-long, multi-agency investigation. Trump notably called the gang "animals" in a White House meeting that included Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims in May. Trump's

"Most (homicides) were as a result of machete and knife attacks, rendering their victims visually unidentifiable. Bodies are then left out in the open, sending a message of intimidation to our communities." — Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims

remarks **caused a backlash at that time.**

Becerra, as attorney general, had led California's "resistance" to Trump's policies on immigration, healthcare, and the environment in speeches and in the courtroom.

In 2017, California sued the Trump administration 24 times. The 25 arrested, in what law enforcement dubbed Operation Blue Inferno, are being charged with 14 murders, as well as kidnapping and drug trafficking in the Mendota area. "This is a good day. An extremely violent street gang, which has terrorized western Fresno County, has been completely dismantled," U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott said.

Violent Crimes

Mims detailed some of the horrific allegations against the gang. "Most (homicides) were as a result of machete and knife attacks, rendering their victims visually unidentifiable," Mims said. "Bodies are then left out in the

open, sending a message of intimidation to our communities." Law enforcement served 19 search warrants on Thursday in Mendota, Kerman and Los Angeles. Also, a search of 37 cells in 11 state prisons yielded contraband such as cell phones, drugs, and weapons. "Yesterday was D-Day for this investigation," Scott said.

"Nothing like this happens without the complete dedication, hard work, and professionalism of a core team of law enforcement professionals." Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp said she would prosecute 11 members in county court next week. **Others face federal charges.**

Immigration Status Vague

Scott did not reveal the immigration status of the 25 alleged gang members arrested. President Trump has blamed America's immigration policies for the influx of gangs like MS-13. The gang's history traces to Central America. "This was not an immigration operation. This was a law enforcement criminal operation," Scott deflected.

Homeland Security Investigation Special Agent Ryan Spradlin said his department's role is to undertake criminal investigations. "The victims of violent criminal organizations first concern isn't where their assailants are from. It is that they are taken off the streets, and justice be delivered," Spradlin said.

"Often misperceptions exist that HSI's involvement in an operation like this is a nexus to illegal immigration," Spradlin said. "Our partners know that HSI doesn't initiate nor participate in criminal investigations because of someone's citizenship, but rather the alleged criminal activity they are involved with." Becerra wanted the focus to remain on the criminal allegations, not MS-13's country of origin. "This is not an operation based on color, creed, origin or status. It was based on criminal..."

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CA DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHIEF SINGS NEW TUNE

September 4, 2018 | David Taub

The California Democratic chairman who supported a boycott of a burger chain now yearns for a double-double. Last week, when news of In-N-Out's \$25,000 donation to the California Republican party became public, Twitter users sought retribution. They started hashtags, calling for a boycott because of the company's political donations. Eric Bauman, chairman of the state Democratic Party, joined in, becoming the highest-profile political figure to do so.

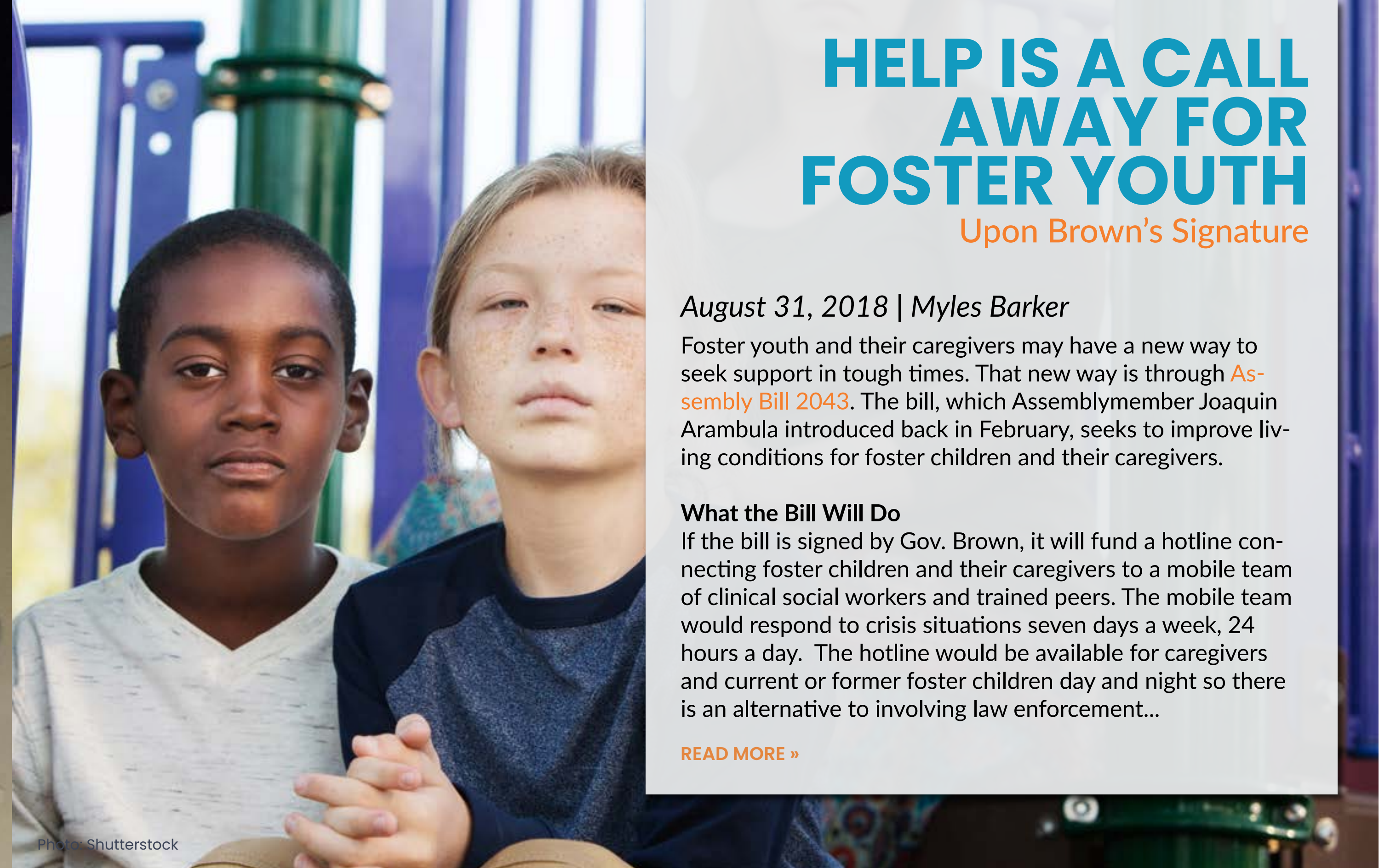
In-N-Out Balances Donations

Upon further review, it turned out that In-N-Out donated more money in the last three years to a political action com-

mittee seeking to support business-friendly Democrats than it did to Republican interests. Now Bauman tweets he has no hard feelings for the Irvine-based burger company. Responding to a tweet from John A. Perez, another big name in state Democratic Party circles, Bauman said, "I'm all in for a double-double - no cheese - as long as no one tells my Rabbi... And then I want the onions grilled!"

Bauman shared similar sentiments Monday (Sept. 3), at a Labor Day event in Fresno. The Fresno Bee reported that Bauman said there was no boycott, noting how much money the party raised because of it. While many shared the boycott...

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HELP IS A CALL AWAY FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Upon Brown's Signature

August 31, 2018 | Myles Barker

Foster youth and their caregivers may have a new way to seek support in tough times. That new way is through Assembly Bill 2043. The bill, which Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula introduced back in February, seeks to improve living conditions for foster children and their caregivers.

What the Bill Will Do

If the bill is signed by Gov. Brown, it will fund a hotline connecting foster children and their caregivers to a mobile team of clinical social workers and trained peers. The mobile team would respond to crisis situations seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The hotline would be available for caregivers and current or former foster children day and night so there is an alternative to involving law enforcement...

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CALIFORNIA GOP ATTORNEY GENERAL CANDIDATE FACES ETHICS PANEL

September 4, 2018 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — A Republican candidate for California state attorney general is facing an ethics tribunal just two months before the November election. Former judge Steven Bailey is accused of using his office to further his statewide campaign, improperly accepting gifts and steering business to a firm where his son worked — all in violation of judicial ethics. Bailey served as an El Dorado County judge from 2009 through the end of August 2017.

Bailey says the allegations "simply lack merit" and blames political gamesmanship. Three special masters from the Commission on Judicial Performance will begin considering them today. The hearing in Sacramento creates another hurdle as Bailey tries to unseat Democratic incumbent Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who was appointed to fill a vacancy last year. No decision is expected from the commission until well after the Nov. 6 election. Bailey eventually could be publicly admonished even though he is no longer a judge, but not...

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US PLANS TO SIDESTEP LIMITS

on Detaining Immigrant Children

September 6, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Thursday it plans to circumvent a longstanding court agreement that governs how immigrant children are treated in immigration custody, in part to detain families longer as a way to deter migrants from crossing the Southwestern border illegally. The Homeland Security Department announced proposed regulations that would terminate the so-called Flores agreement that requires the government to keep children in the least-restricted setting and required their release generally after 20 days in detention.

The 1997 case that spawned the agreement will almost certainly land back in court. U.S. District Court Judge Dolly M. Gee rejected a request by administration lawyers this summer to allow for longer family detention. The agreement became an issue during a “zero-tolerance” policy enforced at the border to criminally prosecute anyone caught crossing illegally.

More than 2,900 children were separated from their parents, prompting international outrage and scathing criticism over what many said was inhumane treatment of migrants. Officials said children couldn’t be in criminal custody with their parents, and were limited in how long they could detain families because of the agreement.

Most Family Detention Centers at Capacity

The government currently has three operational family detention centers, but most are at capacity. However, Homeland Security asked for space to house 12,000 beds for families, plus space to house 20,000 unaccompanied minors. That process is moving forward; the Defense Department has completed legal and environmental requirements needed but they’re still working on the legal framework for the use of Fort Bliss, in El Paso, Texas for immigrant families. The Department of Health and Human Services, which manages unaccom-

panied children crossing illegally, has not yet formally requested space for the minors, which it must do in order to set up the use. The rules proposed Thursday would allow the government to hold families until their immigration cases were completed, a move that government officials contend makes cases go much faster than if families are released.

“Legal loopholes significantly hinder the department’s ability to appropriately detain and promptly remove family units that have no legal basis to remain in the country.”

— Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen

“Today, legal loopholes significantly hinder the department’s ability to appropriately detain and promptly remove family units that have no legal basis to remain in the country,” Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. “This rule addresses one of the primary pull factors for illegal immigration and allows the federal government to enforce immigration laws as passed by Congress.” Immigrant advocates have opposed any effort to detain children longer than the agreement allows.



Homeland Security announced it would terminate the agreement which requires the release of immigrant children generally after 20 days. (AP Photo/Cliff Owen)



AP Photo/David J. Phillip, File



September 5, 2018 | AP News

NEW YORK — Clutching his young daughter in his arms, LeBron James said he stands with Nike, a clear reference to the company’s Colin Kaepernick ad campaign.

The basketball superstar — and new Los Angeles Laker — made the remarks as he received an award Tuesday for both his style and his philanthropy from Harlem’s Fashion Row. The fashion collective partnered with Nike for the New York event, both a fashion show and an awards ceremony that focused on diversity in the fashion world. The evening culminated in the reveal of the latest LeBron James Nike

basketball shoe: a women’s sneaker designed by three female African-American designers and inspired by strong African-American women. In emotional remarks, James paid tribute to the three women in his life — his mother, wife and 3-year-old daughter, Zhuri.

He noted how his mother had raised him alone, and given him “a sense of pride, a sense of strength, a sense of no worry.” “Because of you, Gloria James, I’m able to be in a position today where I can give back and showcase why I believe African-American women are the most powerful women in the...

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AP Photo/Michael Dwyer

‘MAD SCIENTIST’ FROM CLOVIS

The Hottest Golfer on the Planet

September 4, 2018 | AP News

NORTON, Mass. — Golf’s latest search for a breakout star has come to the quirky little laboratory of Bryson DeChambeau. The 24-year-old physics major known as the “Mad Scientist” won his second straight event in the FedEx Cup playoffs on Monday, shooting a 4-under-par 67 at TPC Boston to win the Dell Technologies Championship by two strokes over Justin Rose. It was the third win of the year for DeChambeau, who also won the playoff opener at Ridgewood and is guaranteed the No. 1 seed for the Tour Championship regardless of what happens in the third round.

And he solidified his claim to be one of Jim Furyk’s captain’s picks for the American Ryder Cup team, where he will join the likes of Dustin Johnson, Rickie Fowler, Jordan Spieth, back-to-back U.S. Open winner Brooks Koepka and others who have staked a claim to follow Tiger Woods as golf’s...

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TRUMP ‘EXACT OPPOSITE’ OF WOODWARD’S PORTRAYAL

September 5, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump insisted Wednesday that he’s “the exact opposite” of Bob Woodward’s portrayal of him in a new book that has set off a firestorm in the White House with its descriptions of current and former aides calling Trump an “idiot” and a “liar.” Trump complained on Twitter that people can “get away with” such depictions and again suggested changing libel laws.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on Fox News she hasn’t spoken with Trump about filing any libel lawsuit. The tell-all book by a reporter who helped bring down President Richard Nixon quotes Trump aides disparaging the president’s judgment and claiming they plucked papers off his desk to prevent him from withdrawing from a pair of trade agreements. Woodward’s book is the latest to throw the Trump administration into damage-control mode with explosive anecdotes and concerns about the...

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AP File Photo



AP Photo/Adel Hana

WORLD

UNITED STATES ENDS

Palestinian Refugee Agency Funding

August 31, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The United States is ending its decades of funding for the U.N. agency that helps Palestinian refugees, the State Department announced Friday, a week after slashing bilateral U.S. aid for projects in the West Bank and Gaza. The U.S. supplies nearly 30 percent of the total budget of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA, and had been demanding reforms in the way it is run.

The department said in a written statement that the United States “will no longer commit further funding to this irredeemably flawed operation.” The decision cuts nearly \$300 million of planned support. It comes as President Donald Trump and his Middle East point-men, Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt, prepare for the rollout of a much-vaunted but as yet unclear peace plan for Israel and the Palestinians, and it could intensify Palestinian suspicions that Washington is using the humanitarian funding as leverage.

U.S. Was Set to Contribute \$355 Million

The Palestinian leadership has been openly hostile to any proposal from the administration, citing what it says is a pro-Israel bias, notably after Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in December and moved the

“... we made it clear that the United States was no longer willing to shoulder the very disproportionate share of the burden...” — Excerpt from State Department announcement

U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv in May. The Palestinian Authority broke off contact with the U.S. after the Jerusalem announcement. In 2016, the U.S. donated \$355 million to the UNRWA, which provides health care, education and social services to Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, and it was set to make a similar contribution this year. In January the Trump administration released \$60 million in funds but withheld a further \$65 million it had been due to provide. The remaining amount — around \$290

million — had yet to be allocated. “When we made a U.S. contribution of \$60 million in January, we made it clear that the United States was no longer willing to shoulder the very disproportionate share of the burden of UNRWA’s costs that we had assumed for many years,” the statement said.

“Several countries, including Jordan, Egypt, Sweden, Qatar, and the UAE (United Arab Emirates) have shown leadership in addressing this problem, but the overall international response has not been sufficient.”

Refugee Agency’s Practices Questioned

The statement criticized the “fundamental business model and fiscal practices” of UNRWA, and what the department characterized as the “endlessly and exponentially expanding community of entitled beneficiaries.”

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced from their homes during the war that led to Israel’s establishment in 1948. Today, there are an estimated 5 million refugees and their descendants, mostly scattered across the region — a figure that has become a point of contention. Palestinian leaders assert the right of those refugees to return to land now under Israeli control.

Last Friday, the State Department announced the U.S. was cutting more than \$200 million in bilateral aid to the Palestinians, following a review of the funding for projects in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ spokesman called that U.S. decision an attempt to force the Palestinians to abandon their claim to Jerusalem.

New Funding from Arab Countries

Speaking before the announcement on UNRWA, its representative in Washington, Elizabeth Campbell...

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IRAN CURRENCY CRASH CAUSES CHAOS

September 5, 2018 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran’s rial fell to a record low on Wednesday as worried residents of Tehran lined up outside beleaguered moneychangers, part of a staggering 140-percent drop in the currency’s value since America pulled out of the nuclear deal only four months ago.

Those who went to work at the start of the Iranian week on Saturday saw their money shed a quarter of its value by the time they left the office Wednesday. Signs of the currency chaos can be seen everywhere in Tehran, where travel agents offer vacation prices only in hard currency and diapers have disappeared from store shelves — something acknowledged

by the supreme leader. Many exchange shops in downtown Tehran simply turned off their electronic signs showing the current rate for the U.S. dollar, while some Iranians who wanted hard currency sought out informal money traders on street corners. Exchange shops that remained open offered 150,000 rials to the U.S. dollar. “Everyone’s just nervous,” said Mostafa Shahriar, 40, who was seeking dollars. There was no immediate acknowledgment of the plummeting currency on state media.

(Click [here](#) to view a video on how sanctions affect Iranian citizens much more than regime leaders.)

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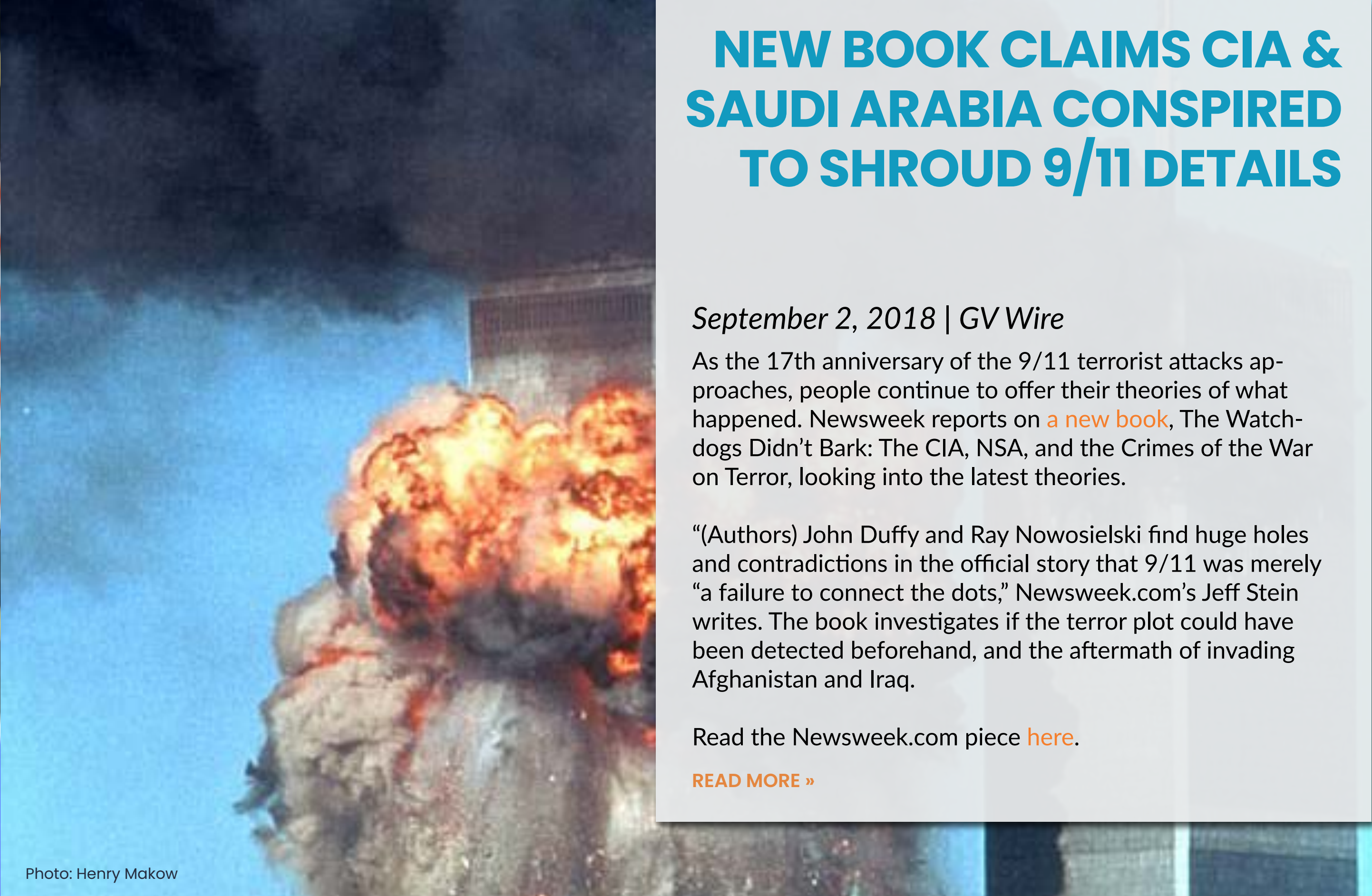


Photo: Henry Makow

NEW BOOK CLAIMS CIA & SAUDI ARABIA CONSPIRED TO SHROUD 9/11 DETAILS

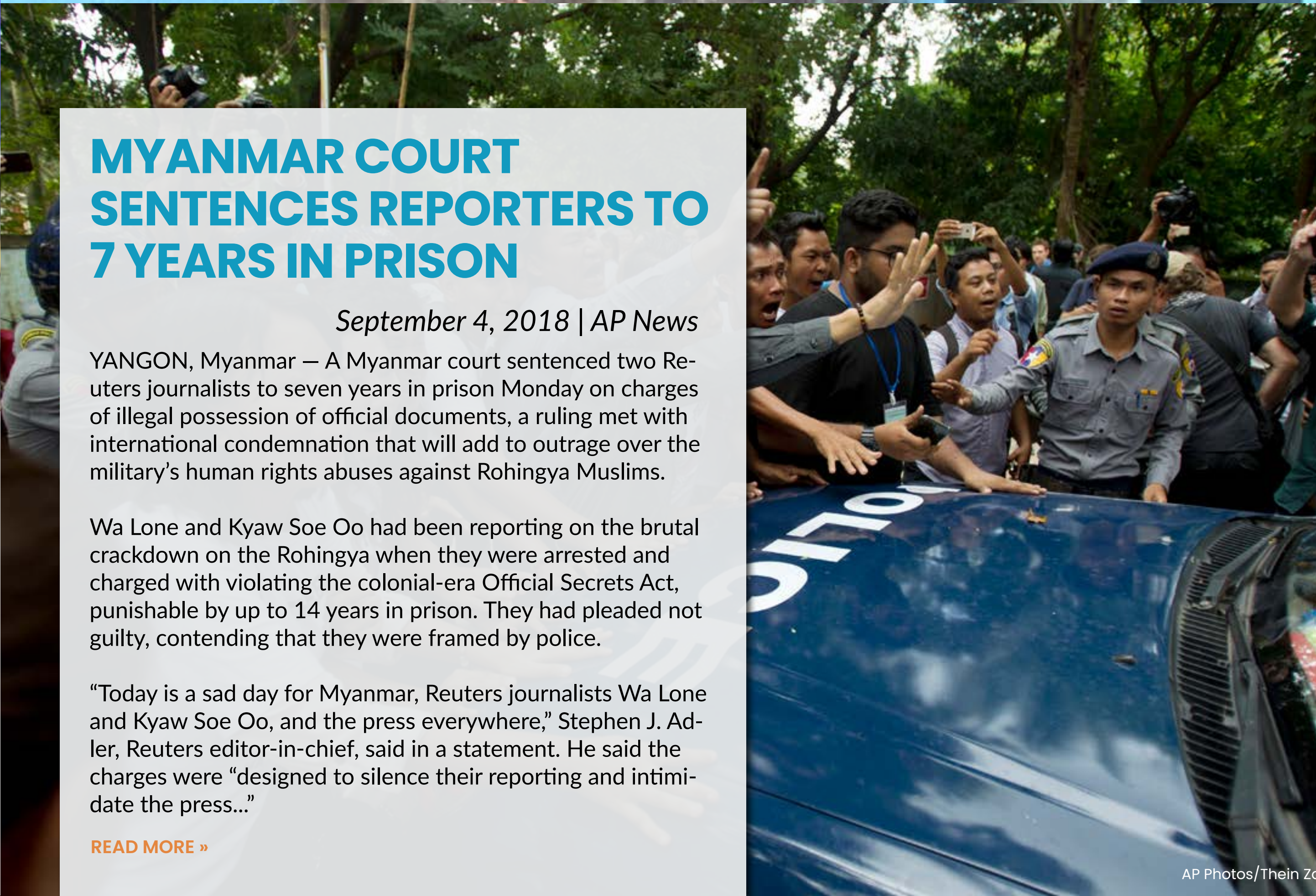
September 2, 2018 | GV Wire

As the 17th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks approaches, people continue to offer their theories of what happened. Newsweek reports on [a new book](#), *The Watchdogs Didn't Bark: The CIA, NSA, and the Crimes of the War on Terror*, looking into the latest theories.

“(Authors) John Duffy and Ray Nowosielski find huge holes and contradictions in the official story that 9/11 was merely “a failure to connect the dots,” Newsweek.com’s Jeff Stein writes. The book investigates if the terror plot could have been detected beforehand, and the aftermath of invading Afghanistan and Iraq.

Read the Newsweek.com piece [here](#).

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MYANMAR COURT SENTENCES REPORTERS TO 7 YEARS IN PRISON

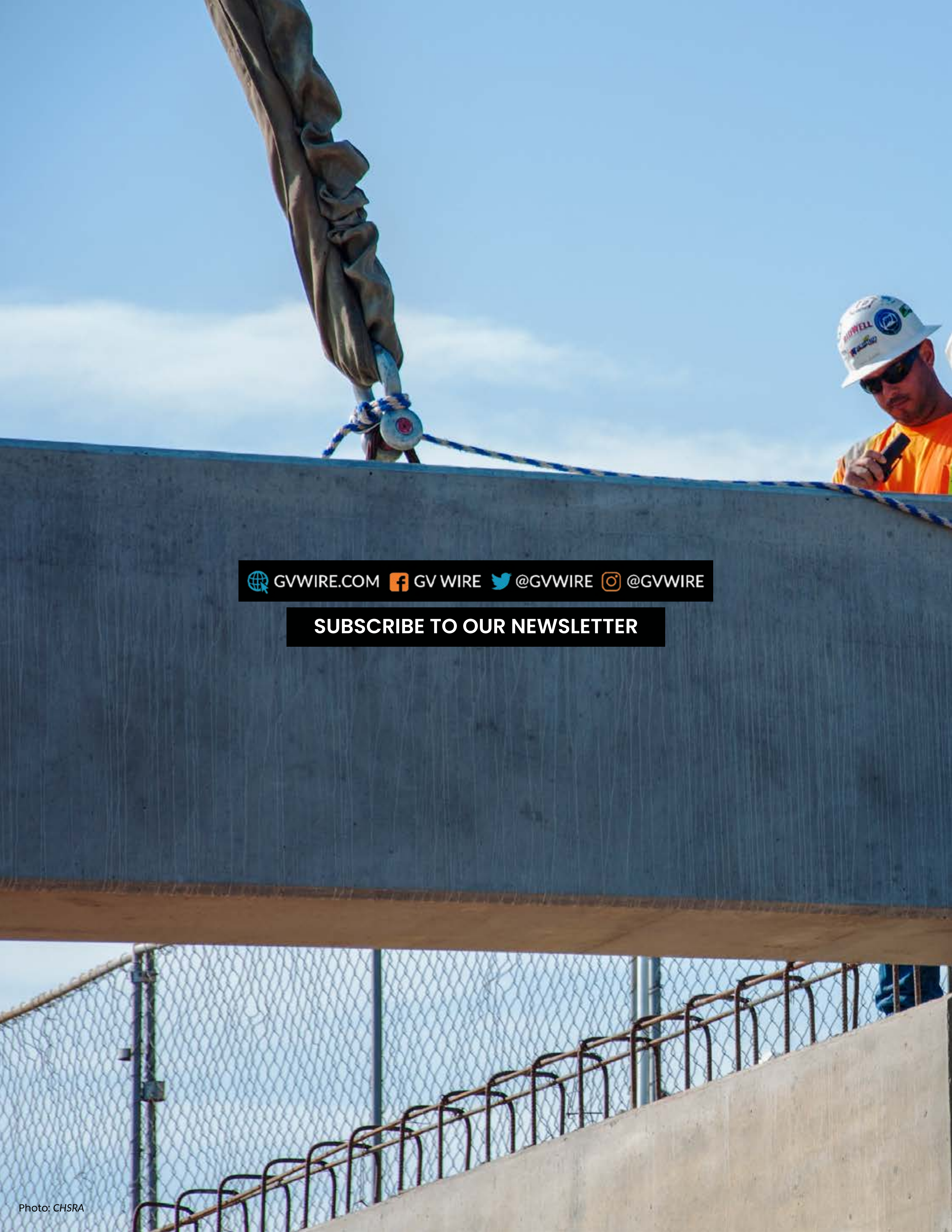
September 4, 2018 | AP News





YANGON, Myanmar — A Myanmar court sentenced two Reuters journalists to seven years in prison Monday on charges of illegal possession of official documents, a ruling met with international condemnation that will add to outrage over the military’s human rights abuses against Rohingya Muslims.

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo had been reporting on the brutal crackdown on the Rohingya when they were arrested and charged with violating the colonial-era Official Secrets Act, punishable by up to 14 years in prison. They had pleaded not guilty, contending that they were framed by police.

“Today is a sad day for Myanmar, Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, and the press everywhere,” Stephen J. Adler, Reuters editor-in-chief, said in a statement. He said the charges were “designed to silence their reporting and intimidate the press...”

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