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GV WIRE NABS 10 FIRST PLACE AND RUNNER-UP CNPA AWARDS

May 5, 2019 | GV Wire

In its first year in the competition, GV Wire won four first-place and six second-place awards in CN-PA's California Journalism Contest.

The winners were announced Saturday at the California News Publishers Association gala in Long Beach. In addition, GV Wire claimed four third-place awards and fifth place for General Excellence in the competition for small digital news organizations. GV Wire, however, competed against California digital publications of all sizes in the

"We have an excellent team of local journalists working on the stories that matter most to our community. I want to congratulate our team for their determined and relentless effort in bringing these stories to light." – GV Wire Publisher Darius Assemi

columns and story presentation/page layout and design categories, winning a total of three awards. In all, 18 GV Wire entries made the final round of judging. "We have an excellent team of

local journalists working on the stories that matter most to our community," said GV Wire Publisher Darius Assemi. "I want to congratulate our team for their determined and relentless effort in bringing these stories to light."

Taub Is Double First-Place Winner

David Taub won the enterprise and feature writing divisions and claimed second, third, and fourth places for local government reporting. "Every Californian was impacted by the 2014 law that radically changed (the) usage of plastic bags. This is a smart piece exploring the aftermath," said a judge about Taub's first-place story on California's plastic bag ban. Of Taub's first-place feature on Bitwise co-CEO Irma Olguin Jr., a judge wrote, "A compelling read on a native daughter of Fresno who is making a difference in the community today and

for the future." Said a judge of Jamie Ouverson's first-place video feature on Central Valley Honor Flight 17: "Wonderful topic with terrific production values. Emotional and meaningful work." The year's honors work published in 2018.

Here are the categories and GV Wire journalism honored by the judges:

First Place

Enterprise: Is California's Plastic Bag Ban Working?

David Taub

Feature: Olguin Writes New Code on Tech, Downtown Fresno, David Taub

Video Journalism: This Video Brings the Cost of Freedom Home, Jamie Ouverson

Youth/Education: Bargain Warp Speed Learning Has a Name: Dual Enrollment, Myles Barker, Bill McEwen

"Every Californian was impacted by the 2014 law that radically changed (the) usage of plastic bags. This is a smart piece exploring the aftermath," said a judge about David Taub's first-place story on the state's plastic bag ban.

Second Place

Columns (all digital publications): Stop the Spin. Give Us the Truth on High-Speed Rail, Bill McEwen

In Depth Reporting: Who Runs California? Bill McEwen, Drew Phelps, David Taub

Informational Graphic: Pros and Cons of Measure P, Alexis DeSha

Local Government: Recounting the Drama: Hill...

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May 9, 2019 | Bill McEwen

The Fresno mayoral election is starting out hot and before the March primary will make all those before it seem like dinner debates in an arctic basement. The entry of Andrew Janz has injected sizzle into the election and stoked a fire in the belly of incumbent Lee Brand.

Here are 11 things to look for:

1. What Janz Must Do to Win

No challenger has beaten the incumbent in Fresno's strong-mayor era, which began with Jim Patterson's defeat of Michael Erin Woody (and his Hollywood good looks) in 1996. Moreover, Fresno hasn't elected a Democratic mayor of any kind since Karen Humphrey in 1989. To become the first winning challenger (and a Democrat at that), Janz must successfully make the case that change is needed and he's a worthy replacement. He also has to articulate how his plans will benefit a majority of voters. And one more thing: He'll have to convince undecided voters that his running for mayor isn't a consolation prize for giving Rep. Devin Nunes — Public Enemy No. 2 for Democrats nationwide behind you know who— the political fight of his life. Sounds easy, but it isn't.

2. What Brand Must Do to Win

Brand has to convince voters they are better off today than they were four years ago — and that they'll prosper even more by keeping him at the helm. In addition, he must hammer

home that entrusting the mayor's job to someone who has never held elected office isn't worth the risk. History will note that in 2000, voters put their trust in an actor with no previous political experience (Alan Autry) rather than go with a popular former mayor (Dan Whitehurst).

3. Janz Will Try to Tie Brand to Nunes, Trump

The mayor's position is officially nonpartisan but many people vote along party lines. Though Brand is what might be called a "compassionate Republican," Janz will portray him as being closely aligned with Nunes and President Donald Trump. His campaign already has a fundraising pitch that calls Brand "a Nunes lackey." Local voters know Brand isn't a Nunes lackey. In fact, the mayor is criticized by some Fresno Republicans for straying from his conservative roots. But for Janz, this is about attracting donors from outside of the city. They loved the way he took on Nunes last year, and Janz wants them to donate to this political quest, too.

4. Brand Will Hold a Big Fundraising Edge, Just as He Did in

You can argue that Brand's huge fundraising edge over Henry R. Perea powered his narrow comeback victory three years ago. In the campaign's homestretch, Brand was all over the airwaves while Perea had flat run out of money. Brand already has about \$500,000 for the campaign and will raise another \$500,000 — or more — the rest of the way. Political insiders...

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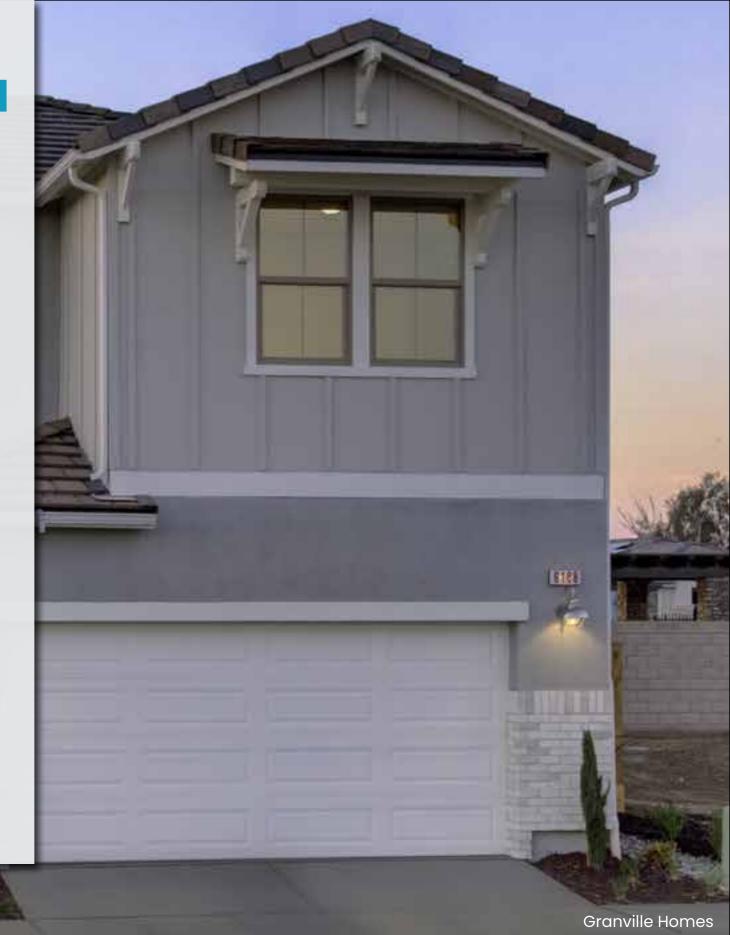
THIEVES RANSACKED THE **GRANVILLE HOME OF HOPE. CAN** YOU HELP POLICE FIND THEM?

May 8, 2019 | GV Wire

How cold must your heart be to burglarize the Granville Home of Hope? Two men stole everything but the dining room table Wednesday morning from the home after disabling the alarm system. The value of the stolen items — which included the stove and refrigerator — is estimated at \$17,500, making the crime a felony. The burglars also caused an estimated \$2,500 in damage.

"We are offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the thieves that did this," said Darius Assemi, Granville Homes president. "I will be personally overseeing this." Anyone with information should contact the Fresno Police Department at 559 621-6311 or Granville Homes at 559 492-4049. A passer-by saw the men and snapped a picture of one of the vehicles at about 5:50 a.m. Upon seeing the on-looker, the men fled. One of the suspects drove a white late-model Dodge Journey sports utility vehicle with black...

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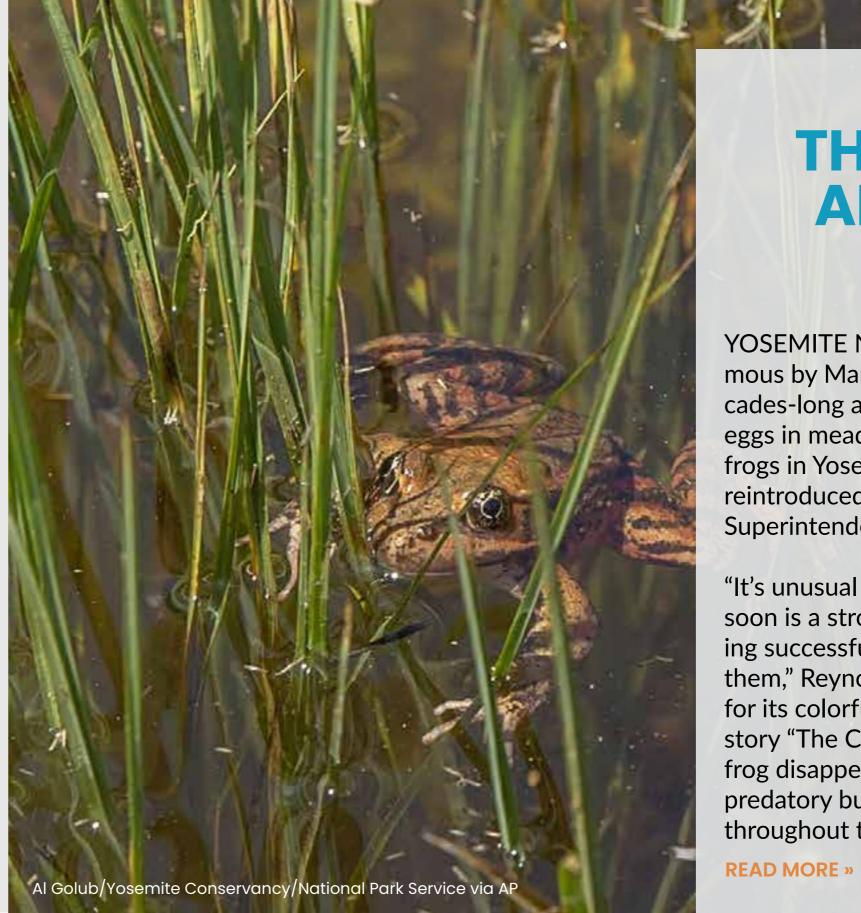
RED-LEGGED FROGS THRIVING IN YOSEMITE AFTER LONG ABSENCE

May 6, 2019 | AP News

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — Red-legged frogs made famous by Mark Twain are thriving in Yosemite Valley after a decades-long absence. Ecologists this spring found clusters of eggs in meadows and ponds, proof of the first breeding by the frogs in Yosemite since 2017, when adult red-legged frogs were reintroduced after a 50-year absence, Yosemite National Park Superintendent Mike Reynolds said Monday.

"It's unusual to find eggs in any location and to find them this soon is a strong indication that red-legged frogs are adapting successfully to the riparian areas where we reintroduced them," Reynolds said. The California red-legged frog is named

for its colorful legs and belly. It was featured in Twain's short story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." The frog disappeared from Yosemite in part because non-native, predatory bullfrogs first introduced to a reflection pond spread throughout the valley and, over time, gobbled them up...



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GOVERNOR NEWSOM PROPOSES \$213B STATE SPENDING PLAN

May 9, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed a \$213 billion state budget Thursday that boosts spending on K-12 education, wildfires and homelessness while putting more money toward state reserves and debt. The revised budget is up \$4.5 billion from his first proposal in January and maintains a \$21.5 billion surplus, the state's largest in at least 20 years. His announcement kicks off negotiations with lawmakers, who must pass a budget by June 15 or lose pay. Newsom is proposing \$150 million more in grants to communities to help the homeless than he did in January, as well as \$40 million to public colleges and universities to help homeless students. He's also added \$20 million to help renters facing eviction.

"This homeless issue is out of control," Newsom said.

"This homeless issue is out of control. It is a stain on the state of California." — Gov. Gavin Newsom

"It is a stain on the state of California." Newsom echoed themes of his predecessor, former Gov. Jerry Brown, as he highlighted the importance of

saving money for a future recession and paying down debt. He has proposed boosting the state's "rainy day" fund to \$16.5 billion and for the first time putting about \$400 million toward an education reserve fund. While the state is flushed with cash now, Newsom warned the good times may not continue. He projected revenues would be down by several billion in future years. "The headwinds are real," he said.

Newsom Has Until June 30 to Sign the Spending Plan

Newsom is boosting spending in some key areas, but his new budget is unchanged in many ways from January. He has already proposed new spending to expand health care for young immigrants living in the country illegally, prevent and fight wildfires, spur more housing and boost early child care programs. He wants to add a new tax on drinking water while taking away taxes on

tampons and diapers, though he's only proposed that tax cut for two years. Democratic lawmakers wanted it to continue for at least five. The governor also proposed a tax increase to bolster the state 911 system. Such increases would create a long-term, sustainable pot of money, he said. Newsom has until June 30 to sign a spending plan that will cover the fiscal year be-

ginning July 1. Assembly Budget Committee chairman Phil Ting said the state must continue to rebuild its social infrastructure while investing in education, health and housing programs. He noted the governor and the legis-

About \$147 billion of the budget comes from the state's general fund, the pot of money that Newsom and lawmakers can spend however they choose. The rest is in special and bond funds dedicated to specific purposes.

lature have differences, but he said he is confident law-makers will deliver a budget by the June 15 deadline. Senate Budget Committee chairwoman Holly Mitchell lauded Newsom for preparing for the next recession.

Will There Be More Funding for Violence Prevention, Health Care?

Republican Sen. Patricia Bates criticized Newsom for including proposals for new taxes despite the state having a \$21.5 billion surplus. Newsom faces pressure from lawmakers and outside groups to unleash the historic surplus. Democrat Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer has asked for \$100 million for youth development and pre-arrest diversion programs for children under 18. Democratic Sen. Anna Caballero, who represents many Central Valley communities without clean water, has a proposal to tap surplus from water infrastructure improvements rather than enacting a new tax. Gun control groups have asked for \$39 million toward violence prevention, and some lawmakers have proposed expanding health care to all immigrants living in the state illegally rather than just those up to...

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May 8, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Insurance claims have topped \$12 billion for the November wildfires in California, making them the most expensive in state history. The figure released Wednesday by Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara covers the fire that largely destroyed the town of Paradise and two Southern California blazes. It's up about \$600 million from data released in January. Most of the damages relate to the Paradise fire, which killed 85 people and destroyed nearly 19,000 buildings. "While last year's tragic wildfires turned thousands of people's lives upside down, insurance is helping to rebuild and recover," Lara said in a news release during Wildfire Preparedness Week.

Insurance Becoming More Costly, Harder to Obtain

California experienced some of its deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in 2017 and 2018. A series of sweeping fires in late 2017 had been the most expensive, with claims topping \$11.8 billion. The increasing destruction is making it harder and more costly for people to obtain homeowners insurance.

The insurance department has started collecting data on policy non-renewals to better assess patterns and locations where coverage is being dropped, Lara said earlier this year. "Wildfire has long been part of California's landscape and...

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THERE'S A TOBACCO BAN PROPOSED IN BEVERLY HILLS. RESIDENTS ARE LIT.

May 8, 2019 | AP News

BEVERLY HILLS — A fiery debate is breaking out across Beverly Hills as people at tony hair salons, gas stations and stores weigh in on whether the city of the rich and famous should become the first in the U.S. to outlaw the sale of to-bacco products everywhere except a few cigar lounges. The City Council decided Tuesday night to make some changes to the proposal, such as allowing guests in the city's luxury hotels to acquire cigarettes through their concierge or room service.

Members indicated they plan to pass the amended measure May 21. Abstainers have said yes to the idea, and the sooner the better, while smokers protested, no way. "It's a ridiculous idea," hair stylist Giuseppe Franco shouted soon after lighting up a Marlboro Light on a breezeway just outside the upscale hair salon that bears his name." First off, let's be...

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STATE WORKERS MISSPENT \$427,000 IN TAXPAYER MONEY, AUDIT FINDS

May 8, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — A California Department of Transportation manager commuted some 450 miles to work — from San Diego to Sacramento — for two years and the state paid for it, according to an audit released Tuesday. An administrator at Valley State Prison in Chowchilla watched thousands of You-Tube videos at work and a state hospital administrator also racked up tens of thousands of dollars with long commutes.

Those were among the more egregious misuses of taxpayer money outlined in the report on improper activities by state agencies and employees. The California state auditor said investigations completed between July and December of last year identified about \$427,000 in inappropriate expenditures. It did not specifically identify any of the people involved in the improprieties. Most of the agencies involved indicated they had or intended to investigate the misuses and implement training and other reforms to prevent future violations...

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REFUSAL TO HAND OVER TRUMP'S TAX RETURNS SETS UP LEGAL FIGHT

May 7, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has made it official: The administration won't be turning President Donald Trump's tax returns over to the Democratic-controlled House. Mnuchin told Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., in a Monday letter that the panel's request "lacks a legitimate legislative purpose" as Supreme Court precedent

"I will consult with counsel and determine the appropriate response." — Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal requires. In making that determination, Mnuchin said he relied on the advice of the Justice Department. He concluded that the Treasury Department is "not authorized to

disclose the requested returns and return information." He said the Justice Department will provide a more detailed legal justification soon.

Related Story: California Renews Bid to Get Presidential Candidates' Taxes

The move, which was expected, is sure to set in motion a legal battle over Trump's tax returns. The chief options available to Democrats are to subpoen the IRS for the returns or to file a lawsuit. Last week, Neal promised "we'll be ready" to act soon after Monday's deadline. Treasury's denial came the day that the House Judiciary panel scheduled a vote for Wednesday on whether to find Attorney General William Barr in contempt of Congress for failing to comply with a subpoena for a full, unredacted copy of special counsel Robert Mueller's report. Fights with other House panels are ongoing.

Request Would Potentially Weaponize Private Tax Returns

"I will consult with counsel and determine the appropriate response," Neal said in a statement Monday. Neal originally demanded access to Trump's tax returns in early April under a law that says the IRS "shall furnish"

the returns of any taxpayer to a handful of top law-makers, including the chair of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee. He maintains that the committee is looking into the effectiveness of IRS mandatory audits of tax returns of all sitting presidents, a way to justify his claim that the panel has a potential legislative purpose. Democrats are confident in their legal justification and say Trump is stalling in an attempt to punt the issue past the 2020 election. The White House and the

Republican president's attorneys declined to comment on the deadline to turn over Trump's returns. Mnuchin has said Neal's request would potentially weaponize private tax returns for political purposes. Trump has privately made clear he has no intention of turning over the much-coveted records. He is the first president since Wa-

"What's unprecedented is this secretary refusing to comply with our lawful ... request. What's unprecedented is a Justice Department that again sees its role as being bodyguard to the executive and not the rule of law. What's unprecedented is an entire federal government working in concert to shield a corrupt president from legal accountability." — Rep. Bill Pascrell

tergate to decline to make his tax returns public, often claiming that he would release them if he was not under audit.

Trump Says The Attempt to Get His Returns Was an Invasion of His Privacy

"What's unprecedented is this secretary refusing to comply with our lawful ... request. What's unprecedented is a Justice Department that again sees its role as being bodyguard to the executive and not the rule of law," said Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-N.J. "What's unprecedented is an entire federal government working in concert to shield a corrupt president from legal accountability." But the president has told those close to him that the attempt to get his returns was an invasion of his priva-

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KUSHNER OVERSEES IMMIGRATION PROPOSALS WITH EYE ON CONGRESS

May 8, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Hastily written executive orders. Declarations by tweet. President Donald Trump's White House hasn't been known for its careful crafting of policy. But Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, has spent months drawing up a long-awaited immigration overhaul plan that the White House began to roll out Tuesday.

Frustrated by congressional inaction and stinging Republican defeats, Kushner has been meeting with GOP groups and speaking with lawmakers to try to fashion a plan that the president and his party might be able to unite behind. He's been assisted by a team that includes experts in drafting legislation so that he can be less reliant on Capitol Hill, according to people familiar with the efforts. It's a new approach for an administration with few legislative achievements and facing the challenges of navigating a hostile Democratic...

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UN REPORT: HUMANS ACCELERATING EXTINCTION OF SPECIES

May 7, 2019 | AP News

People are putting nature in more trouble now than at any other time in human history, with extinction looming over 1 million species of plants and animals, scientists said Monday. But it's not too late to fix the problem, according to the United Nations' first comprehensive report on biodiversity. "We have reconfigured dramatically life on the planet," report co-chairman Eduardo Brondizio of Indiana University said at a press conference.

Species loss is accelerating to a rate tens or hundreds of times faster than in the past, the report said. More than half a million species on land "have insufficient habitat for long-term survival" and are likely to go extinct, many within decades, unless their habitats are restored. The oceans are not any better off. "Humanity unwittingly is attempting to throttle the living planet and humanity's own future," said George Mason University biologist Thomas Lovejoy, who has been...

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May 9, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Beto O'Rourke has hired one of the masterminds behind Barack Obama's unlikely 2008 primary victory, part of the Democratic candidate's efforts to balance his freewheeling style with the organizational demands of a presidential campaign.

Delegate guru Jeff Berman began working for O'Rourke in April. In his role as senior adviser for delegate strategy, Berman will oversee the campaign's efforts to navigate the complicated process of amassing enough delegates to secure the Democratic nomination. His work in a similar role is credited with helping catapult Obama past favorite Hillary Clinton during the 2008 race. The move signals that O'Rourke is taking steps to professionalize his White House campaign, which he launched in March.

He resisted similar efforts during the 2018 Texas Senate race that turned him into a national political star, eschewing pollsters, consultants and prepared speeches. He ultimately lost that contest to Republican Sen. Ted Cruz by 2 percentage points. In outward appearance, O'Rourke's presidential campaign has a similar feel to his Senate bid. He often drives...

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TALIBAN ATTACK U.S.-BASED AID GROUP OFFICE IN AFGHAN CAPITAL, KILL 5

May 8, 2019 | AP News

KABUL, Afghanistan — Taliban fighters attacked the offices of a U.S.-based aid organization in the Afghan capital Wednesday, setting off a huge explosion and battling security forces in an assault that lasted more than six hours and killed at least five people, the Interior Ministry said. Dozens of civilian vehicles and shops were either destroyed or damaged, and several buildings also were damaged. A large plume of smoke rose from the area and the sound of sporadic gunfire could be heard. The ministry's statement said four civilians and a police officer were killed and 24 others were wounded in the assault. It was not immediately clear if any foreigners were killed or wounded.

The ministry's statement said the attack ended after all five insurgents were killed by Afghan forces. "Around

"We are incredibly saddened by this attack and are working as quickly as possible to account for our staff." — Counterpart International statement

from both buildings within the compound," it said. The attack targeted U.S.-based aid organization Counterpart International, which has offices near those of the Afghan at-

torney general, said Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi. The group's offices are in a compound with two five-story buildings. "We are incredibly saddened by this attack and are working as quickly as possible to account for our staff," the organization said in a statement on its website. "Their safety and security is our primary concern."

Taliban Said They Would Continue Their Attacks During Ramadan

Johan Bass, U.S. ambassador in Afghanistan, strongly condemned the attack on the NGO. He said the targeted organization helps local communities, trains journalists and supports the Afghan people. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in a statement

also condemned the insurgents for deliberately targeting a civilian aid organization. "Today's attack was particularly deplorable, hitting civilians helping Afghans,"

the statement said.
Taliban spokesman
Zabihullah Mujahid
said the group attacked the organization because it was
involved in "harmful

"Today's attack was particularly deplorable, hitting civilians helping Afghans."

— United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan statement

Western activities" inside Afghanistan, without elaborating. Taliban insurgents stage near-daily attacks on Afghan forces, even as peace efforts have accelerated to find an end to the country's 17-year war.

Related Story: 3 American Soldiers, 1 US Contractor Killed in Afghanistan

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani called for peace with the Taliban last week and promised to free 175 Taliban prisoners ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began Monday. The Taliban said they would continue their attacks during Ramadan, but would be "very careful of civilians during any operation." The insurgents have rejected past cease-fire proposals, saying U.S. and NATO troops must withdraw from the country first. The Taliban also refuse to negotiate directly with the government in Kabul, seeing it as a U.S. puppet.



MIGRANTS AT SOUTHERN BORDER TOP 100K FOR 2ND MONTH IN A ROW

May 8, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The number of migrants apprehended at the Southern border topped 100,000 for the second month in a row as the Trump administration manages an ever-increasing number of Central American families streaming to the U.S. that hardline policies have failed to stem. Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost told senators Wednesday that apprehension numbers were "off the charts," and she's had to divert agents to care for children.

As she spoke, images of Border Patrol agents holding small children flashed behind her. In one, an agent feeds a little girl a bottle. "We cannot address this crisis by shifting more resources," Provost said. "It's like holding a bucket under a faucet. It doesn't matter how many buckets we have if we can't turn off the flow." There were 109,144 migrants encountered in April, the highest since 2007, including more than 58,000 migrant parents and children and 8,800 unaccompanied children taken into custody, according to Homeland Security...

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QATAR TO SEND MONEY FOR WEST BANK, GAZA AFTER ISRAEL TRUCE

May 7, 2019 | AP News

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Qatar on Tuesday said it is sending \$480 million to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after a cease-fire deal ended the deadliest fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants since a 2014 war. Qatar's Foreign Ministry said \$300 million would support health and education programs of the Palestinian Authority, while \$180 million would go toward "urgent humanitarian relief" in U.N. programs and toward electricity.

The Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip suffers from chronic electricity shortages. The recent two-day outbreak of violence killed 25 people in Gaza, both militants and civilians, and four civil-

ians in Israel. Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said Egyptian mediators, along with officials from Qatar and the U.N., helped broker the cease-fire deal.

The deal is believed to include a number of economic aid and development programs in Gaza, including providing additional electricity and creating temporary jobs in a territory where unemployment has skyrocketed to over 50%. Israel approved the resumption of fuel shipments into the Gaza Strip on Tuesday after cutting off the supply during Sunday's surge of violence, according to COGAT, the Israeli defense body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs. It confirmed...

HARRY, MEGHAN 'OVER THE MOON' ABOUT THEIR HEALTHY BABY BOY

May 6, 2019 | AP News

WINDSOR, England — Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, gave birth to a healthy baby boy early Monday, a beaming Prince Harry announced to the world, declaring he's "incredibly proud" of his wife. The baby weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces at birth and was born at 5:26 a.m. (0426 GMT; 12:26 a.m. EDT). Harry said their son was a little bit overdue and that had given the royal couple more time to contemplate names.

Harry said he was ecstatic about the birth of their first child and promised that more details — such as the baby's name — will be shared in the coming days. The couple said earlier they weren't going to find out the baby's sex in advance. "This little baby is absolutely to die for," he said. "I'm just over the moon." The infant is seventh in line to the British throne and Queen Elizabeth II's eighth great-grandchild. Harry is the younger son of Prince Charles, heir to the throne, and the late Princess Diana, who died in a Paris car crash in 1997...

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