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WEEKLY DIGEST
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GV Wire/Jahz Tejo

NEWSOM SIGNS CLEAN WATER BILL, RAISES FUNDS IN VALLEY STOP

July 24, 2019 | David Taub

Visiting a dot on the map in Fresno County called Tombstone, Gov. Gavin Newsom hoped to put an end to unsafe drinking water. The governor on Wednesday came to a home south of Sanger and signed the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (SB 200), which will provide up \$130 million a year for infrastructure and maintenance of water facilities. “The idea that we are living in a state where over a million people don’t have access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water is a disgrace,” Newsom said after signing the bill. “This is the

“The idea that we are living in a state where over a million people don’t have access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water is a disgrace.” — Gov. Gavin Newsom

wealthiest state, the wealthiest democracy in the world. And it happened on our watch. We own this.” He said people don’t belong in positions of power if they can’t

provide safe and clean drinking water. “This is a point of deep pride. Some folks wonder why the hell you get into politics? This is the why,” Newsom said.

Not Coming from High-Speed Rail Money

After much negotiation, Newsom scrapped ideas to pay for the water infrastructure with new taxes. Instead, the money will come from the cap and trade program aimed at improving air quality. Newsom said his signing of the water legislation doesn’t signal a priority of one over the other. “I don’t see them as necessarily competing,” Newsom said. “There are a lot of things in the cap and trade that I think deserve to be prioritized.” The cap and trade program requires the state’s biggest polluters, like oil refineries and farms, to buy credits that allow a certain level of emissions. The program has generated more than \$9.5 billion since its inception, and state officials are supposed to use that

money to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to improve the environment and public health. The high-speed rail project draws upon the cap and trade program for its funding. That won’t be affected by the clean water bill. “High-speed rail money is secure as it relates to its allocation of 25%. Cap and trade does not dilute from that priority,” Newsom said.

Not Spending Surplus Dollars

California voters have approved billions of dollars in infrastructure projects for water districts over the years. The problem, advocates say, is smaller water districts can’t afford to maintain them. The proposal would authorize spending through 2030 to help these districts with operating costs, including consolidating smaller districts to help improve management and finances. Instead of taking the money from the state’s general fund and its bountiful surplus, lawmakers agreed to tap into the cap and trade program. Some lawmakers are alarmed by the idea of raiding the program to pay for other things.

“We’re pitting clean water against clean air. We know Californians can and must have both of them,” said Sen. Bob Wieckowski, D-Fremont, the only lawmaker to vote against the bill earlier this month. Among the Valley delegation, Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield; Melissa Hurtado, D-Sanger; and Anna Caballero, D-Salinas, voted yes. Andreas Borgeas, R-Fresno, was not present to cast a vote, but his office said he supports the bill. Newsom explained why he was leery of using the budget surplus to fund clean water. “It falls flat for one reason. Surpluses are not ongoing. We would love them to be. They are usually one-time. Surpluses come and go. When they go, what are you going to do to address the issue we are trying to address?” Newsom said. “Their argument is, I think, misleading and weak at best.” Newsom met with neighbors to hear about their struggle with...

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COSTA EXPLAINS VOTE OPPOSING THE ISRAEL BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

July 25, 2019 | GV Wire

In a rare showing of bipartisan agreement, the Valley's congressional delegation unanimously approved a non-binding resolution opposing the Israel boycott movement Tuesday. The **tally in the House**: 398 for the resolution, 17 opposed. "The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement is an overt attempt to isolate and weaken our ally, and should be directly and vigorously opposed," Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno) said in a statement. "Attacking the economic and cultural stability of Israel does nothing to improve the well-being of the Palestinian people and is counterproductive to achieving a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

A Resolution Birthed in Controversy

H.R. 246 was introduced in March amid Democratic Party division over comments and tweets by Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, who came to the U.S. as a refugee from Somalia when she was a child. Her opinions were criticized as being anti-Semitic. Omar, as well as Democrat Rep. Rashida

Tlaib of Michigan, strongly support the BDS movement and criticized the resolution. Omar, Tlaib, and fellow first-term Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York opposed the resolution Tuesday. Republicans have amplified the views of the Democrats' left flank to portray the party as deeply divided and at odds with Israel. Several House Democrats and Republicans joined together to voice their support of the resolution on the House floor.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland), the majority leader, had promised lawmakers the bill would come up for a vote before the August recess. It's a way to shield House Democrats from continued Republican efforts to attack them around the issue of Israel, according to a Hoyer aide who spoke on condition of anonymity. In addition to denouncing the global BDS movement, the resolution affirmed the United States' strong support for a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Costa's office said. Joining Costa in backing...

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BUZZFEED'S VERDICT ON FRESNO'S 3-FOOT-LONG BURRITO? WORTH IT!

July 23, 2019 | Jody Murray

A small but growing taco joint in Fresno has gotten a lot of mileage out of its humongous signature entree. Three years ago, Taqueria Yarelis put itself on the viral-video map with the Anaconda Burrito, a 3-foot-long beast of a meal. A Facebook post that debuted the ultra-big burrito in November 2016 now has more than 36 million views.

Then, last week, the taqueria got a signal boost from BuzzFeed's "Worth It" video series. The BuzzFeed team's trip to Fresno, which included a stop at Forestiere Underground Gardens and Tioga-Sequoia Brewing, kicked off the sixth season of "Worth It." The show travels the world and compares items — food, more often than not — at three price points. The question at the end of each episode: Which of the three was worth the cost? The video shows hosts Steven Lim and Andrew Ilnyckyj at a table at the North Fresno Street taqueria, measuring the monstrous meal and enjoying a few bites...

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MAYOR BRAND: AMAZON 'PUT FRESNO ON CORPORATE MAP'

July 24, 2019 | Nancy Price

The opening of the Amazon Fulfillment Center in southwest Fresno last year has meant much more to the city of Fresno than the addition of thousands of new jobs, Mayor Lee Brand said Wednesday at a grand opening ceremony heralding the facility. Amazon built an 850,000-square-foot, \$200 million facility that employed as many as 3,000 during the winter and helped reduce Fresno's unemployment rate to 4.8% — "the lowest in the city of Fresno's history," the mayor said to enthusiastic applause from the dozens of public officials and Amazon staffers at the ceremony.

"But more importantly, you put Fresno on the corporate map," he said. "Suddenly, we're getting much more interest. Since Amazon came, it's been good for Fresno." Brand said city leaders first had to figure out that the old way of doing business wasn't working. "For Fresno, for so many years ... businesses drove by, they flew by, we were passed up, until we finally got smart..."

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GV Wire/Jamie Ouverson



CALIFORNIA SIGNS DEAL WITH 4 AUTOMAKERS TO RAISE GAS MILEAGE

July 25, 2019 | AP News

DETROIT — Four major automakers have reached a deal with California to increase gas mileage and greenhouse gas emissions standards, bypassing the Trump administration's plan to freeze standards at 2021 levels. Ford, BMW, Honda, and Volkswagen are parties to the deal with the California Air Resources Board, which had been at odds with the Trump administration for

"Recognizing the importance of prioritizing safety, consumers will benefit from the expansion of the diverse designs and power trains, providing more choices for families."
— The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

months. California has said it would exercise its powers to set more stringent pollution and mileage standards than the federal government has proposed. The four automakers see the California agreement as "insurance" to provide some certainty to the industry and the state no matter who wins the 2020 presidential elections, according to a person familiar with the talks who asked not to be identified because details of the negotiations haven't been made public. Not all automakers were approached in the talks, the person said. And it's unclear how the rest of the auto industry and the White House will react to the deal. The four automakers represent only about 30% of U.S. new-vehicle sales.

Related Story: 23 Governors Join California in Opposing Trump Mileage Standards

Toyota said it continues to support a single national standard that the whole industry can agree to. "We have, and continue to, pursue an outcome supported by the auto industry at large, the Federal government and the State of California," Toyota said in a statement. The company says one national standard "is optimal for the consumer, regulators and the industry as it simplifies regulations and reduces complexity and cost, which are critical to ensuring future standards can be met."

Messages were left Thursday for General Motors and Fiat Chrysler as well as the White House.

California's Authority to Set Its Own Standards

The Trump administration has sought to freeze Obama administration standards that would have required the fleet of new vehicles to get an average of 36 miles per gallon in real-world driving by 2025. The freeze would keep mileage at around 30 mpg. The administration says the extra expense to comply with the requirements will raise the price of new cars, depriving buyers of new safety technology. The administration also has threatened to challenge California's ability to set its own standards. Under the deal with California, fuel economy and corresponding greenhouse gas emissions standards would rise by 3.7% per year starting with the 2022 model year, through 2026, according to the statement from the four automakers. Automakers could get 1 percentage point of the increase by using advanced technology credits such as those for hydrogen fuel cell, plug-in gas-electric hybrids, and battery electric vehicles.

Ford, BMW, Honda, and Volkswagen are parties to the deal with the California Air Resources Board, which had been at odds with the Trump administration for months.

Automakers also would get credits for devices that aren't counted in EPA test cycles such as stopping the engine at red lights and restarting it quickly when the driver wants to go. The process would be streamlined to get credits approved for new technologies. The automakers also agreed to recognize California's authority to set its own standards, which are followed by at least a dozen other states, and they will not challenge the state's authority, according to the statement. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which draws up federal standards with the Environmental Protection Agency, said the government continues to...

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CALIFORNIA SET TO PAY \$1.65 BILLION FOR WORK ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL

July 24, 2019 | GV Wire & AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — A rented Tesla that was speeding when it ran a red light and killed Benjamin Dean of Clovis was not on semi-autonomous Autopilot mode, police said Wednesday.

Detectives removed a data storage device from the automobile that will be analyzed to help determine the actions that led to the fatal collision, said San Francisco Police Department spokesman Officer Adam Lobsinger. Investigators are also working with Tesla to obtain further evidence, he said. Police arrested the driver, Kelly Cambridge, 21, of Vallejo, on suspicion of vehicular manslaughter and running a red light.

Dean's wife, Kelly, was injured in the collision on Sunday. She remains in critical condition.

Deans Celebrating Wedding Anniversary

The Clovis couple was in San Francisco celebrating their third wedding anniversary, according to Kelly Dean's Facebook page. Benjamin Dean, 39, was a program supervisor at the Fresno County Department of Social Services. Kelly works for the agency as well. Alex Bastian, a spokesman with the district attorney's office, said Wednesday the DA hasn't received the case from the police to make any charging decisions. Drugs and alcohol did not appear to be a factor...

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PAY WITH CREDIT CARD AT DMV? IT'S COMING TO FRESNO

July 23, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California's DMV is trying to improve customer service by accepting credit cards, upgrading its website and offering clearer instructions on how to obtain a new federally mandated ID, according to details announced Tuesday by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Fresno will be one of the test sites in October for a credit card pilot program. The governor's plan didn't specify which of the Fresno offices — there are two — would be involved.

The credit card rollout will begin at a Davis field office in September. "The Strike Team held a series of meetings with the DMV and (credit card) vendors on the issue," the governor's DMV plan says, "and it became clear that the barriers perceived to be in place no longer existed." Newsom cautioned Tuesday the agency's long wait times and other troubles aren't over. "This is going to take a few years. Next...

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UC SYSTEM ACCEPTS RECORD NUMBER OF CALIFORNIA APPLICANTS

July 23, 2019 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — The University of California system accepted a record number of freshmen and transfer students that includes the most ever from California for the 2019-20 academic year, officials announced. The university system's nine undergraduate campuses accepted 71,655 California freshmen and 26,700 students who will transfer from California community colleges. That's 579 more freshmen and 52 more transfer students from California than last year.

"Yet another year of record-setting admissions underscores the tremendous interest in the world-class education at UC," system president Janet Napolitano said Monday. "The best and the brightest young minds continue to make UC their university of choice." The freshman admission rate for California residents jumped 3 percentage points to 62%, while the admission rate for California community college transfers remained at 76%. UC schools have been under pressure to...

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AP File

MUELLER DISMISSES TRUMP'S CLAIMS OF RUSSIA PROBE EXONERATION

July 24, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Robert Mueller on Wednesday bluntly dismissed President Donald Trump's claims of total

The former special counsel told Congress he explicitly did not clear the president of obstructing his investigation. The former special counsel also rejected Trump's assertions that the probe was a "witch hunt" and hoax.

exoneration in the federal probe of Russia's 2016 election interference. The former special counsel told Congress he explicitly did not clear the president of obstructing his investigation. The former special counsel also rejected Trump's assertions

that the probe was a "witch hunt" and hoax. In hours of sometimes halting and stilted testimony, unfolding at a moment of deep division in the country, Mueller also condemned Trump's praise of WikiLeaks, which released Democratic emails stolen by Russia. He declared Russian election interference one of the greatest challenges to democracy that he had encountered in his career. Russia, he said, was "doing it as we sit here."

Related Story: Questions for Mueller From the Left and the Right

One-Word Answers to Many Questions

Mueller's reluctance at the televised Capitol Hill hearings to stray beyond his lengthy written report, and his reliance on terse, one-word answers, produced few if any new revelations to move Americans who may be hardened in their opinions about the success of Donald Trump's presidency and whether impeachment proceedings are necessary. But that didn't stop Republicans and Democrats from their own divergent paths to question Mueller. Trump's GOP allies tried to cast the former special counsel and his prosecutors as politically motivated. They referred repeatedly to what they consider the improper opening of the investigation. Democrats, meanwhile, sought to emphasize the most incendiary findings of Mueller's 448-page report and weaken

Trump's reelection prospects in ways that Mueller's book-length report did not. They hoped that even if his testimony did not inspire impeachment demands — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has made clear she will not pursue impeachment, for now — Mueller could nonetheless unambiguously spell out questionable, norm-shattering actions by the president. Yet Mueller appeared unwilling or unable to offer crisp sound bites that could reshape public opinions. Democrats were hoping for vintage Robert Mueller III, circa 2001 when he was leading the FBI after 9/11. Instead, they saw a less forceful public presence but one still skilled enough in the ways of Washington to not fall for Republicans' leading questions or read his report aloud in a way that Democrats could exploit.

'It is Not a Witch Hunt'

He frequently gave single-word answers to questions, even when given opportunities to crystallize allegations of obstruction of justice against the president. He referred time again to the wording in his report. But he was unflinching on the most-critical matters. In the opening minutes of the hearing, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Jerrold Nadler, a New York Democrat, asked Mueller about Trump's claims of vindication in the investigation. "Did you actually totally exonerate the president?" Nadler asked. "No," Mueller replied. When Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democratic chairman of the House intelligence committee, asked, "Your investigation is not a witch hunt, is it?" "It is not a witch hunt," Mueller flatly replied.

He gave Democrats a flicker of hope when he told Rep. Ted Lieu of California that he did not charge Trump because of a Justice Department legal opinion that says sitting presidents cannot be indicted. That statement cheered Democrats who understood him to be suggesting that he would otherwise have recommended prosecution on the strength of the evidence. But Mueller...

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SENATE APPROVES BILL TO EXTEND 9/11 VICTIMS FUND

AP/Matthew Daly

July 24, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Senate gave final legislative approval Tuesday to a bill ensuring that a victims' compensation fund related to the Sept. 11 attacks never runs out of money.

The 97-2 vote sends the bill to President Donald Trump, who is expected to sign it. The vote came after Democratic senators agreed to allow votes on amendments sponsored by two Republican senators who had been blocking the widely popular bill. The Senate easily defeated the amendments proposed by GOP Sens. Mike Lee of Utah and Rand Paul of Kentucky. The two men were the only senators who vot-

ed against the bill's final passage. Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York said 9/11 first responders and their families have had "enough of political games" that delayed passage of the bill for months. "Our 9/11 heroes deserve this program as written," Gillibrand said. "Let our heroes go home and live in peace and finally exhale."

The bill would extend through 2092 a fund created after the 2001 terrorist attacks, essentially making it permanent. The \$7.4 billion fund is rapidly being depleted, and administrators recently cut benefit payments by up to 70%. The...

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AP/Patrick Semansky

BERNIE SANDERS THINKS MEDIA IS UNFAIR, SO HE CREATED HIS OWN

July 23, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — When Bernie Sanders wanted to preview a speech about his signature health care plan, "Medicare for All," he did not opt for a traditional interview. Instead, he made an appearance on "The 99," his Democratic presidential campaign's in-house livestreamed show, a controlled, decidedly on-message pro-Sanders program that streams on a variety of services including Twitch, a platform used primarily by gamers.

The makeshift studio for the show is in a room with a long wooden table, walls decorated with Sanders campaign signs, and tchotchkes including a Sanders action figure. Sanders sat down for an interview — with his campaign manager, Faiz Shakir. "We are doing these livestreams, we are talking to you directly," Shakir said. "One of the reasons is while we appreciate our friends in the elite media, they don't often...

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JUSTICE DEPT. WILL EXECUTE INMATES FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2003

July 25, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The **Justice Department** said Thursday that it will carry out executions of federal death row inmates for the first time since 2003. Five inmates who have been sentenced to death are scheduled to be executed starting in December. In 2014, following a **botched state execution** in Oklahoma, then-President Barack Obama **directed the department** to conduct a broad review of capital punishment and issues surrounding lethal injection drugs.

It remains unclear today what came of that review and whether it will change the way the federal government carries out executions. That review has been completed and the executions can continue, the department said. Executions on the federal level have been rare. The government has put to death only three defendants since restoring the federal death penalty in 1988, the most recent of which occurred in 2003, when Louis Jones was executed for the 1995...

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WORLD

PARIS HITS RECORD HIGH, LONDON BOILS IN EUROPE HEAT WAVE

July 25, 2019 | AP News

PARIS — Even ice cream, Italian gelato or Popsicles couldn't help this time. Temperature records that had stood for decades or even just days fell minute by minute Thursday afternoon and Europeans and tourists alike threw themselves into fountains, lakes, rivers, or the sea to escape a suffocating heat wave rising up from the Sahara.

On a day that no one on the continent will ever forget, two potential drug dealers in Belgium even called the police, begging to be rescued from the locked container they managed to get themselves trapped in. It was nearly impossible to keep up with the falling records as temperatures climbed higher and higher under a brutal

"We've had such a good time. The Parisians have been so accommodating. We've been getting water where ever we go. We got to play in the fountain. This was amazing."

— Katy James, visiting Paris from Chicago

sun — in Paris, Belgium, London, Germany, the Netherlands — all places where air conditioning is not typically installed in homes, cafes or stores. Even office air-conditioning systems strained under the hot, dry weather that was trapped between two stormy weather systems. Electric fans sold out across Paris — and traditional folding fans made a comeback on the city's stuffy Metro. Still, the atmosphere was buoyant, as people sought to stay cool yet embrace the heat blast from the south.

Katy James, visiting Paris from Chicago, was one of the lucky ones to have a room with air conditioning but she was still out in the streets, enjoying the atmosphere. "We've had such a good time. The Parisians have been so accommodating. We've been getting water where ever we go. We got to play in the fountain. This was amazing," James said. As emissions continue to warm the planet, scientists say there will be more and hotter heat waves, although it's too early to know whether this

hot spell is linked to man-made climate change.

This Could Become the New Normal

"There is likely the DNA of climate change in the record-breaking heat that Europe and other parts of the world are experiencing. And it is unfortunately going to continue to worsen," said Marshall Shepherd, professor of meteorology at University of Georgia. Climate scientists warn this could become the new normal in many parts of the world

London recorded its hottest day on record for July, with the mercury climbing to 98.4 at Heathrow Airport. The previous July record was 98 in 2015.

but it looms as a giant challenge for temperate Europe. French authorities have been particularly wary, since a 2003 heat wave killed nearly 15,000 people, many of them elderly people alone in stiflingly hot apartments. So as tourists frolicked in fountains, authorities, and volunteers in both Paris and London fanned out to help the elderly, sick and homeless, opening centers for them to rest, cool down and shower.

"They are in the street all day, under the sun. No air conditioning, no way to protect oneself from the heat," said Ruggero Gatti, an IT worker joining other Red Cross volunteers handing out water bottles, soup and yogurt to the homeless in the Paris suburb of Boulogne. France's heat alert system went to its maximum level of red for the first time during **last month's heat wave**, when France saw its highest-ever recorded temperature of 46 degrees. On Thursday, about one-fifth of French territory was under a red alert, stretching from the English Channel through the Paris region and down to Burgundy and affecting at least 20 million people. French Health Minister Agnez Buzyn said temperatures on Thursday were expected to be 2 degrees higher than in the deadly 2003 heat wave. Trains were canceled in Britain and France, and French authorities urged...

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AP/Frank Augstein

BORIS JOHNSON BECOMES PRIME MINISTER, AIMS TO WIN OVER DOUBTERS

July 24, 2019 | AP News

LONDON — Boris Johnson became Britain’s new prime minister Wednesday, vowing to lead the U.K. out of the European Union “after three years of unfounded self-doubt.”

Standing outside the shiny black door of 10 Downing St., Johnson derided “the doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters” who believe he cannot succeed in breaking the Brexit impasse that defeated his predecessor, Theresa May. “The people who bet against Britain are going to lose their shirts,” he said. Johnson has just 99 days to make good on his promise to deliver Brexit by Oct. 31, come what may. The former mayor of London and foreign secretary is getting Britain’s top

job in politics after winning a contest to lead the governing Conservative Party. Famed for his bravado, quips in Latin and blond mop of hair, Johnson easily defeated Conservative rival Jeremy Hunt, winning two-thirds of the votes of about 160,000 party members across the U.K.

He replaces May, who announced her resignation last month after Parliament repeatedly rejected the withdrawal agreement she struck with the 28-nation bloc. That has left Britain stranded in Brexit limbo as the U.K.’s departure from the EU was delayed past its long-scheduled March exit date. Johnson took office in a day of carefully choreographed...

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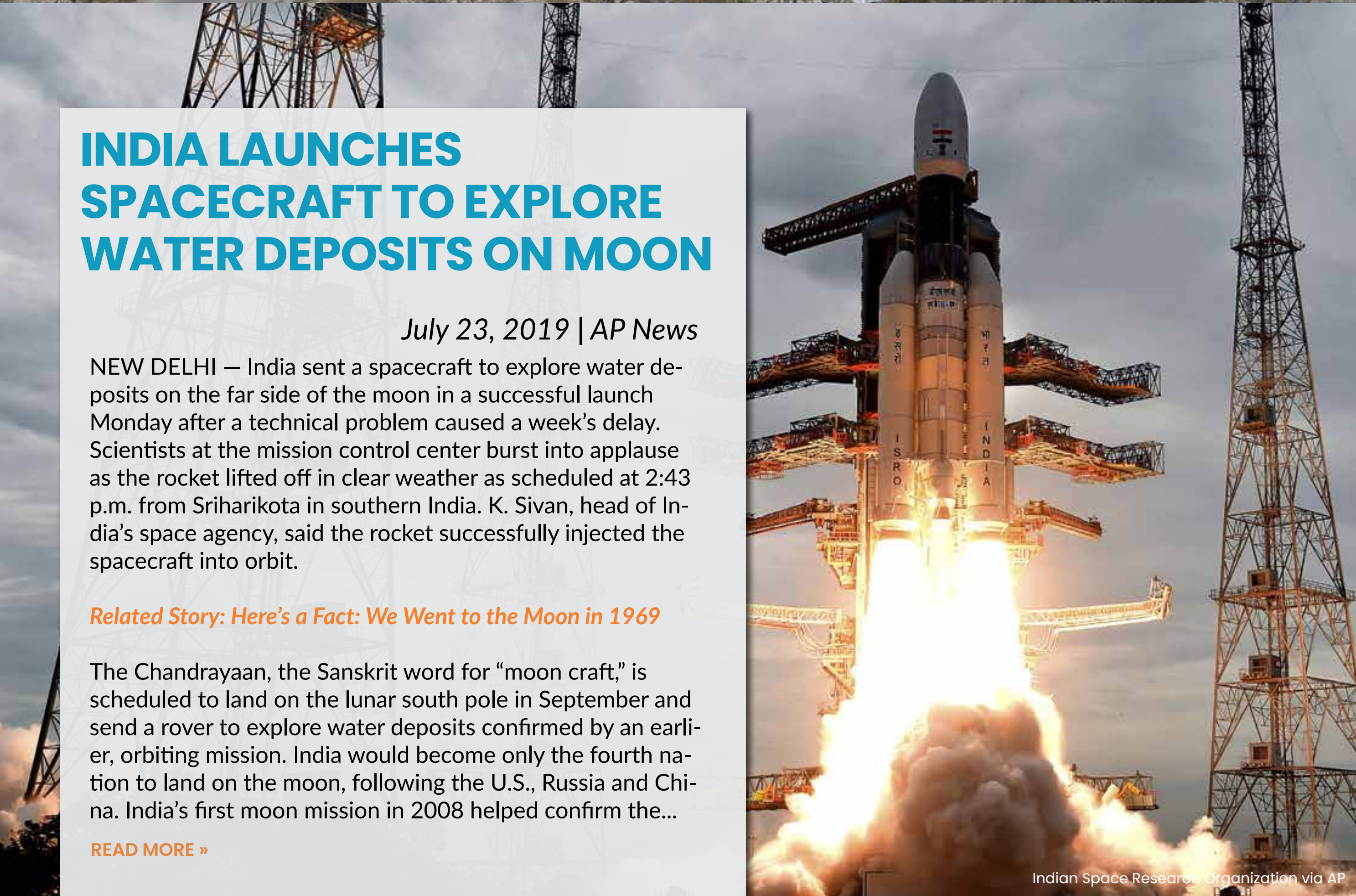
ISRAELI CREWS DEMOLISH PALESTINIAN HOMES IN EAST JERUSALEM

July 22, 2019 | AP News

JERUSALEM — Israeli work crews on Monday began demolishing dozens of Palestinian homes on the outskirts of an east Jerusalem neighborhood, in one of the largest operations of its kind in years. The demolitions capped a years-long legal battle over the buildings, constructed near the invisible line straddling the city and the occupied West Bank. Israel says the buildings were erected too close to its West Bank separation barrier. Residents say the buildings are on West Bank land, and the Palestinian Authority gave them construction permits.

In the wake of a recent Supreme Court decision clearing the way for the demolitions, Israeli work crews moved into the neighborhood overnight. Massive construction vehicles smashed through the roofs of several buildings, and large excavators were digging through the rubble. Gilad Erdan, Israel’s minister of public security, said the Supreme Court ruled the illegal construction “constitutes a severe security threat...

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INDIA LAUNCHES SPACECRAFT TO EXPLORE WATER DEPOSITS ON MOON

July 23, 2019 | AP News

NEW DELHI — India sent a spacecraft to explore water deposits on the far side of the moon in a successful launch Monday after a technical problem caused a week’s delay. Scientists at the mission control center burst into applause as the rocket lifted off in clear weather as scheduled at 2:43 p.m. from Sriharikota in southern India. K. Sivan, head of India’s space agency, said the rocket successfully injected the spacecraft into orbit.





The Chandrayaan, the Sanskrit word for “moon craft,” is scheduled to land on the lunar south pole in September and send a rover to explore water deposits confirmed by an earlier, orbiting mission. India would become only the fourth nation to land on the moon, following the U.S., Russia and China. India’s first moon mission in 2008 helped confirm the...

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Indian Space Research Organization via AP



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