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WEEKLY DIGEST
AUGUST 30, 2019

PROGRESSIVE PUNDIT CORNEL WEST PACKS CITY COLLEGE EVENT

August 27, 2019 | David Taub

Cornel West packed them in at Fresno City College for a speech Tuesday (Aug. 27) afternoon. The noted social commentator and frequent panelist on “Real Time with Bill Maher” drew an overflow crowd of 800 people, with hundreds more turned away from the Old Administration Building auditorium. His hour-long speech dabbled in politics, but was heavier on humanity. Basically, his message was be kind and love one another.

**“I see Brother Bernie (Sanders) is escalating and moving up. But, we just want to make sure our politicians have vision, integrity, concern for our poor working people. We have to get our criteria in place. We’ve got to make sure immigrants are treated with dignity and sanctity, our working people are treated with dignity and sanctity, people of color...”
— Dr. Cornel West**

After the speech, he signed books and took photos with his fans. GV Wire asked him his thoughts on the 2020 election.

“My mama said ‘peacocks strut because they can’t fly.’ I want to be an eagle,” West told the audience.

What strategy does he recommend to those seeking to defeat President Donald Trump? “Energize fellow citizens, tell the truth, seek justice, and we’ll beat him.” Fresno City College officials said other

speakers who drew similar crowds were former San Francisco Giants pitcher Sergio Romo, celebrity advice-giver Dr. Drew Pinsky, and Chaz Bono.

Related Story: Provocative Cornel West Will Speak at Fresno CC



Cornel West signs autographs after a speech at Fresno City College on Aug. 27, 2019 (GV Wire/Jahz Tello)

Watch a video at this link.

“I see Brother Bernie (Sanders) is escalating and moving up. But, we just want to make sure our politicians have vision, integrity, concern for our poor working people. We have to get our criteria in place. We’ve got to make sure immigrants are treated with dignity and sanctity, our working people are treated with dignity and sanctity, people of color... and most importantly our politicians have integrity. I work with Brother Bernie, no doubt about that. But, all of us have to be accountable,” West said.

What strategy does he recommend to those seeking to defeat President Donald Trump? “Energize fellow citizens, tell the truth, seek justice, and we’ll beat him.” Fresno City College officials said other



FRESNO STATE IS AGAIN AMONG NATION'S BEST UNIVERSITIES

Shutterstock

August 26, 2019 | GV Wire

The accolades continue for Fresno State, which has many missions, not the least of which is to graduate first-generation college students. Washington Monthly ranked Fresno State No. 24 in the nation among out of 395 public and private colleges on its latest list of top national universities. And, two weeks ago, the university placed No. 35 in [Money Magazine's top 50 "Best Public Colleges"](#) list, which measures the quality of education, affordability, and outcomes.

Four Straight Years in Top 25
[Fresno State has cracked Washington Monthly's Top 25 four consecutive years.](#) This year's rankings include six Ivy League institutions, six University of California campuses, MIT, and top-ranked Stanford University. "We are proud to be recognized as a leading public university in the nation for expanding

educational opportunity for diverse students and conducting research that benefits all," said Fresno State President Joseph I. Castro in a statement. "Just as importantly, these rankings place a premium on public service, which transforms our surrounding communities, where more than 80% of our alumni choose to stay and work."

Washington Monthly uses what it calls "a different kind of college ranking" and focuses on colleges that best serve the country instead of those best known for prestige and wealth.

"Real improvement will mean following the example of institutions like (Fresno State), our 24th-ranked national university, which enrolls an unusually large number of low-income and first-generation students and helps them graduate into...

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TAKE A TOUR OF FRESNO'S RAPHIO CHOCOLATE FACTORY

August 28, 2019 | GV Wire

GV Wire videographer Jahz Tello's sweet tooth was put to the test when putting together this story on Raphio Chocolate Factory, 783. E. Barstow Ave., near Hoover High School in Fresno.

While chocolate is one of life's simple joys, making it is more complicated than you might think and definitely time-consuming.

"It's very healthy. It's sweet. It's delicious. But there's a lot of work involved," says Raphio's owner, Elisia Otavi-Makmur.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

Take a Tour on Saturday

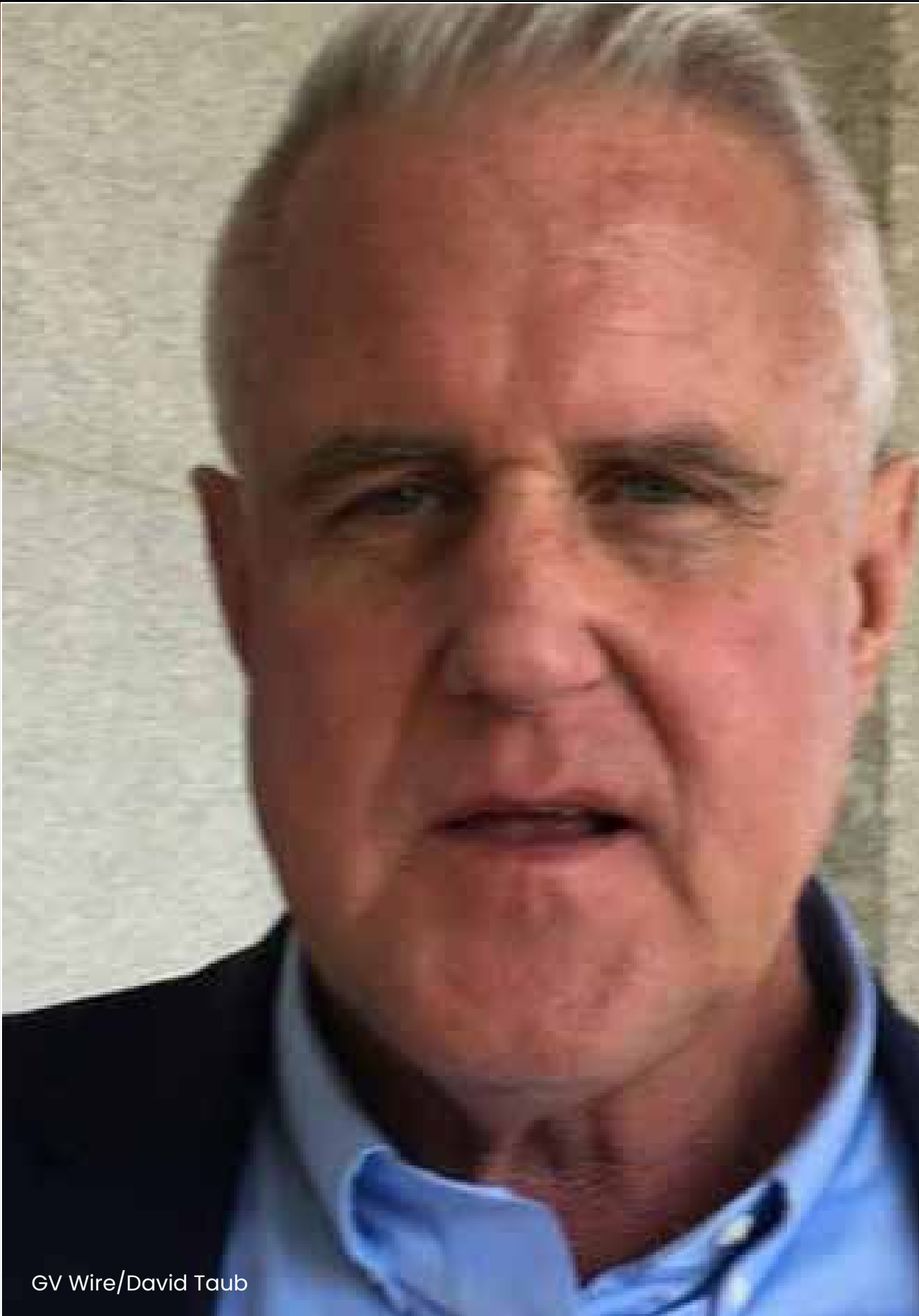
By the way, Raphio is offering guided tours at 2:30 p.m. Saturday for \$12.

More information is available [at this Facebook link.](#)

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GV Wire/Jahz Tello



GV Wire/David Taub

JUDGE ORDERS SLATIC, STUDENT TO STAY AWAY FROM EACH OTHER

August 26, 2019 | David Taub

A Fresno County Superior Court judge ordered Fresno Unified Trustee Terry Slatic and a Bullard High School student to stay 20 yards away from each other, at a Monday morning hearing. The student, a 16-year old cheerleader, filed a temporary restraining order against Slatic in July. Judge Noelle Pebet denied that and set a hearing to discuss a full-time restraining order, scheduled for today.

Because she is a minor, GV Wire isn't identifying the plaintiff by name. Slatic told the judge he was prepared for his defense. However, when he realized the student was represented by attorney Aida Macedo, he asked for a continuance. The judge granted the continuance until Oct. 7, as she said Slatic was entitled to. However, she also granted Macedo's request that Slatic stay 20 yards from the student. The order is mutual, so the student must stay 20 yards away as well. Upon the judge's ruling, Slatic balked, noting it may affect his ability to serve as an...

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AP File

STATE

DEAL ON CALIFORNIA CHARTER SCHOOLS OVERHAUL ANNOUNCED

August 29, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a deal on Wednesday that would overhaul how the state authorizes and judges its charter schools. The Legislature must still approve it, which appears to be a formality after its top two leaders endorsed it. California has seen growing charter school enrollment in communities serving mostly low-income families. Charter schools are

“It increases accountability for all charter schools, allows high-quality charter schools to thrive, and ensures that the fiscal and community impacts of charter schools on school districts are carefully considered.” — a statement released by Gov. Newsom and other legislative and executive officials

publicly funded, but they operate by different rules than traditional public schools. Anyone can apply for a charter school, and state law requires school districts to OK them if they meet certain basic requirements.

The result is charter school enrollment has more than doubled over the last 10 years, according to a legislative analysis of the proposal. Today, California has more than 1,300 charter schools that account for about 10% of the state’s more than 6.2 million public school students, according to the California Department of Education.

Details of the Bill Confirmed by Governor’s Office

The bill, which would have to pass the Legislature by Sept. 12, would no longer let the state authorize charter schools. Instead, only school districts and county governments could do that. And it would narrow the appeals process, forcing applicants to focus on the same set of facts as laid out in their original proposal. The bill would also require all new charter school teachers to be credentialed and would give existing teachers five years to do so. And the bill would alter the criteria for approving new charter schools to include an assessment of how the school would impact the community. Going forward, schools would be judged not only by test

scores, but also things like graduation and suspension rates. Details of the bill were confirmed by the governor’s office.

“This agreement focuses on the needs of our students,” according to a statement released by Newsom, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon and other legislative and executive officials. “It increases accountability for all charter schools, allows high-quality charter schools to thrive, and ensures that the fiscal and community impacts of charter schools on school districts are carefully considered.”

Pressure on Local Education Budgets

More than 60% of the state’s charter schools are either in Los Angeles County, San Diego County or the nine counties included in the Bay Area near San Francisco. A legislative analysis says most of the growth in charter schools has been in areas where students come from low-income families. Critics, including teachers unions, have long blamed the proliferation of charter schools for putting pressure on local education budgets. But supporters say the schools are a necessary alternative for students who need something more than what traditional schools can offer.

The California Charter Schools Association, which had opposed the bill, says it is now “neutral” after the changes. “We are committed to moving forward together to increase access to high-quality public schools of all types and for all kids,” association President and CEO Myrna Castrejon said in a news release. Labor groups — including the California Teachers Association and...

“We are committed to moving forward together to increase access to high-quality public schools of all types and for all kids.” — California Charter Schools Association President Myrna Castrejon

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CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY OKS MEDICAL CANNABIS ON K-12 CAMPUSES

August 26, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California schools may soon allow parents to administer medical marijuana to their children on K-12 campuses.

The California Assembly approved a bill Monday that lets school boards decide whether parents can administer medical marijuana on school campuses. It would allow the use of marijuana in non-smoking form.

Current law prevents marijuana on school campuses, meaning children who use medical cannabis to treat seizures have to go off campus to get their medication. Supporters of the

bill say that's a dangerous and onerous requirement. Opponents worry about allowing the drug on campus and question whether medical marijuana regulations for children are strong enough.

If it passes the Senate in a final vote it will go to Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom. His predecessor, Jerry Brown, vetoed a similar proposal last year.



GV Wire/David Taub

COX-VALADAO CONGRESSIONAL REMATCH OFFICIAL IN DISTRICT 21

August 28, 2019 | David Taub

A month after filing his paperwork and appearing at a public event with the vice president, David Valadao has made it official. The Hanford Republican is running for Congress in a rematch against TJ Cox (D-Fresno). “I cannot continue to sit silent while TJ Cox pursues a radical liberal agenda that hurts our communities. The Central Valley needs a full-time Representative that people can be proud of and trust,” Valadao said in an email statement.

Cox’s campaign also issued a statement, touting what he’s done eight months in office thus far. “Congressman TJ Cox hit the ground running when he took office in January, and he’s already delivering for the working families of the Central Valley and standing up to Trump’s out of control presidency,” his campaign said via email. Cox eeked out a victory in 2018, supplanting Valadao by 862 votes. The election was so...

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FACEBOOK TIGHTENS POLITICAL AD RULES, BUT LEAVES LOOPHOLES

August 28, 2019 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — Facebook is tightening its rules around political advertising ahead of the 2020 U.S. presidential elections, an acknowledgement of previous misuse. But it’s not clear if it will be enough to stop bad actors from abusing its system. The changes include a tightened verification process that will require anyone wanting to run ads pertaining to elections, politics or big social issues like guns and immigration to confirm their identity and prove they are in the U.S.

Beginning in mid-September, such advertisers confirm their group’s identity using their organization’s tax identification number or other government ID. The verified group name will be listed on the “paid for by” disclaimers that disclose the backers of ads. Facebook says it will verify this information against government records and will note in the disclaimer for confirmed ads that they’re placed by a “confirmed organization.” That process won’t apply to everyone, as Facebook...

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U.S. 'THIS AIN'T YOUR MOTHER'S MARIJUANA," SURGEON GENERAL SAYS

August 29, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Federal health officials issued a national warning Thursday against marijuana use by adolescents and pregnant women, as more states legalize the increasingly potent drug for medicinal and recreational use. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Surgeon General Jerome Adams made the announcement, with Azar calling marijuana "a dangerous drug." Officials said President Donald Trump has donated \$100,000 — one-quarter of his annual government salary — toward a digital campaign to raise awareness of the risks. Trump has forgone his official salary since taking office.

Marijuana Has Gotten More Potent

The warning comes as legal marijuana has grown into a \$10-billion industry in the U.S. with nearly two-thirds of states legalizing it, mainly for medical uses. An increasing number of states and localities are also allowing

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personal, recreational use.

Countering the opioid epidemic is a top issue for the White House, but marijuana had not gotten

such high-level attention. Adams said science shows that marijuana is harmful to the developing brains of teenagers and to the human fetus. The drug has also gotten stronger, with a three-fold increase in the concentration of the active ingredient THC in cultivated plants over the last 20 years. "This ain't your mother's marijuana," Adams said.

Federal Law Unchanged

While many states have changed their marijuana laws, federal law still treats it as a controlled substance akin to opioids. Federal officials say they fear the trend toward legalization may make it more enticing for teenagers to try marijuana. It's a commonly used drug among

youths, they said, along with alcohol and e-cigarettes. No states allow legal marijuana use by teens. Adams said that for teens it carries a risk of affecting brain development, which continues in the 20s. Frequent marijuana use by teenagers is associated with changes in parts of the brain that are involved with attention, memory, decision-making and motivation.

Among pregnant women, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug, with about 7% reporting they had used it within the past month in a 2017 study. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics advise women not to use marijuana during pregnancy, and to discontinue the drug if they find out they are pregnant.

Among pregnant women, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug, with about 7% reporting they had used it within the past month in a 2017 study.

HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Brett Giroir said pregnant women taking marijuana to relieve morning sickness should stop. "If you have morning sickness, talk to your physician," he said.



MANY KIDS TAKE A PASSION FOR THE PLANET BACK TO SCHOOL

August 29, 2019 | AP News

For many kids, heading back to school means more than resuming classes and homework. It means getting back to clubs and student organizations focused on sustainability — everything from composting and recycling to reducing food waste and promoting cleaner oceans and waterways.

“There’s a lot of passion there, and a strong desire to deal with the problems facing the environment that they are going to be inheriting.” “Young people tend to be incredibly active in sustainability issues, much more so than many adults,” says April Peebler, executive director of Heirs to our Oceans

(H2OO), a Berkeley, California-based organization that tries to help 12- to 17-year-olds from around the world learn about and advocate for the environment.

“There’s a lot of passion there, and a strong desire to deal with the problems facing the environment that they are going to be inheriting.” Hannah Ono, 15, of Boston, has already been advocating for the environment for years. In fourth grade, she and some friends started a petition asking Dunkin’ Donuts to stop using Styrofoam cups. The Change.org petition drew 300,000 supporters, and helped persuade the...

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AP/Julie Pace

FARMERS’ LOYALTY TO TRUMP TESTED OVER NEW CORN-ETHANOL RULES

August 29, 2019 | AP News

LACONA, Iowa — When President Donald Trump levied tariffs on China that scrambled global markets, farmer Randy Miller was willing to absorb the financial hit. Even as the soybeans in his fields about an hour south of Des Moines became less valuable, Miller saw long-term promise in Trump’s efforts to rebalance America’s trade relationship with Beijing.

“The farmer plays the long game,” said Miller, who grows soybeans and corn and raises pigs in Lacona. “I look at my job through my son, my grandkids. So am I willing to suffer today to get this done to where I think it will be better for them? Yes.” But the patience of Miller and many other Midwest farmers with a president they mostly supported in 2016 is being put sorely to the test. The trigger wasn’t Trump’s China tariffs, but waivers the administration granted this month to 31 oil refineries so they don’t have to...

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And clover, bu clover

THE PLACES IT’LL GO: DR. SEUSS EXHIBITION HITTING THE ROAD

August 28, 2019 | AP News

BOSTON — Dr. Seuss is hitting the road this fall with a large interactive exhibit that will immerse visitors in some of the most iconic books by the beloved children’s writer. The exhibit is centered on a maze based on “Oh, the Places You’ll Go,” the Dr. Seuss book that urges children to explore the world and move mountains despite the pitfalls and challenges. Children and adults will be able to explore rooms based on “The Cat in the Hat,” “The Lorax,” “Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?” and other works.

The 15,000-square-foot exhibition announced publicly Wednesday is scheduled to open in Toronto in October. There are plans to take it to Boston, Seattle, Houston and several other North American cities. “I wanted to explore the books and bring the characters to life in a new and engaging way,” said Susan Brandt, president of San Diego-based Dr. Seuss Enterprises, the company founded by Audrey Geisel...

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Kilburn Experiences, LLC/Dr. Seuss Enterprises via AP



AP/Leo Correa

WORLD

BRAZIL ACCEPTS PLANES FROM CHILE TO FIGHT AMAZON FIRES

August 28, 2019 | AP News

PORTO VELHO, Brazil — Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on Wednesday said he has accepted four planes from Chile to help fight Amazon fires, and he accused the French president of portraying himself as “the one and only person” concerned about the environment. In

“The kids are affected the most. They’re coughing a lot. They have problems breathing. I’m concerned because it affects their health.” — Elane Diaz, a nurse in Porto Velho

criticizing French leader Emmanuel Macron, Bolsonaro extended a personal dispute that has, for now, sidelined a pledge of \$20 million from the Group of Seven nations to help protect Amazon rainforest.

Amazon nations, excluding Venezuela, will meet in September “to come up with our own unified strategy for preserving the environment, and also for exploration sustainable in our region,” Bolsonaro said after meeting Chilean President Sebastián Piñera in Brasília, the Brazilian capital.

Countries in Latin America that contain Amazon rainforest “have sovereignty over the Amazon, that needs to be recognized always,” Piñera said. About 60% of the Amazon region is in Brazil. The vast Amazon also includes Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, an overseas region of France. Lingering smoke in the Amazon, meanwhile, is reportedly causing increased respiratory problems — particularly among children and the elderly — as fires in the region rage.

The Number of People Treated for Respiratory Issues Increased Sharply

“The kids are affected the most. They’re coughing a lot,” said Elane Diaz, a nurse in the Rondonia state capital of Porto Velho, as she waited for a doctor’s appointment Tuesday at the city’s 9 of July hospital with her 5-year-old son Eduardo. “They have problems breathing. I’m concerned because it affects their health.” The number

of people treated for respiratory issues increased sharply in recent days at the local Cosme e Damia Children’s hospital. “This period has been very tough. The dry weather and the smoke causes many problems for children, such as pneumonia, coughing and secretion,” Daniel Pires, a pediatrician and the hospital’s adjunct director told the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper. He said the number of cases has more than doubled since the early part of the month. Fears over health impacts have been growing with the surge in fires, with more than 83,000 blazes documented by the country’s National Space Research Institute since the start of the year. That’s a 77% increase over the same period last year. About half of the fires occurred in the Amazon region, with most in the past month.

But the issue has been overshadowed by growing acrimony between Brazil and European countries seeking to help fight Amazon fires in a region seen as vital to the health of the planet. At a summit in France this week, G-7 nations pledged \$20 million for the effort, with a separate \$12 million from Britain and \$11 million from Canada.

Brazilians Support Their President Despite Criticism

Bolsonaro said Wednesday that Brazil is willing to accept “bilateral” offers of aid. But the president, who took office this year with a promise to boost development in Latin America’s biggest economy, has suggested the offers of international aid mask a plot to exploit the Amazon’s resources and weaken Brazilian growth. He raised those complaints again at the meeting with Chile’s president, accusing Germany and France of trying to “buy” the sovereignty of Brazil. Macron has said Brazil’s sovereignty must be...

At a summit in France this week, G-7 nations pledged \$20 million for the effort, with a separate \$12 million from Britain and \$11 million from Canada.

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August 27, 2019 | AP News

BIARRITZ, France — Never mind his differences with world leaders on China, trade, Russia, Iran and more. President Donald Trump’s takeaway message from the Group of Seven summit in France was “unity.” In fact, “flawless” unity.

During this year’s gathering of leaders of the world’s wealthiest democracies, Trump went to great lengths to portray it as something of a lovefest, papering over significant disagreements on major issues. “If there was any word for this particular meeting of seven very important countries, it was unity,” Trump said at a news conference Monday closing out the two-day gathering in the French resort of Biarritz.

“We got along great,” he said. “We got along great.” He continued that message Tuesday after returning home from France. “The G-7 was a great success for the USA and all,” he wrote in a tweet. “LameStream Media coverage bore NO relationship to what actually happened in France – FAKE NEWS. It was GREAT!”

After Trump disrupted the last two G-7 summits with his erratic behavior, other world leaders seemed determined to play along this year in the interest of keeping any negative drama out of the headlines. First came the decision by French President Emmanuel Macron, the summit host, to...

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Iranian Presidency Office via AP

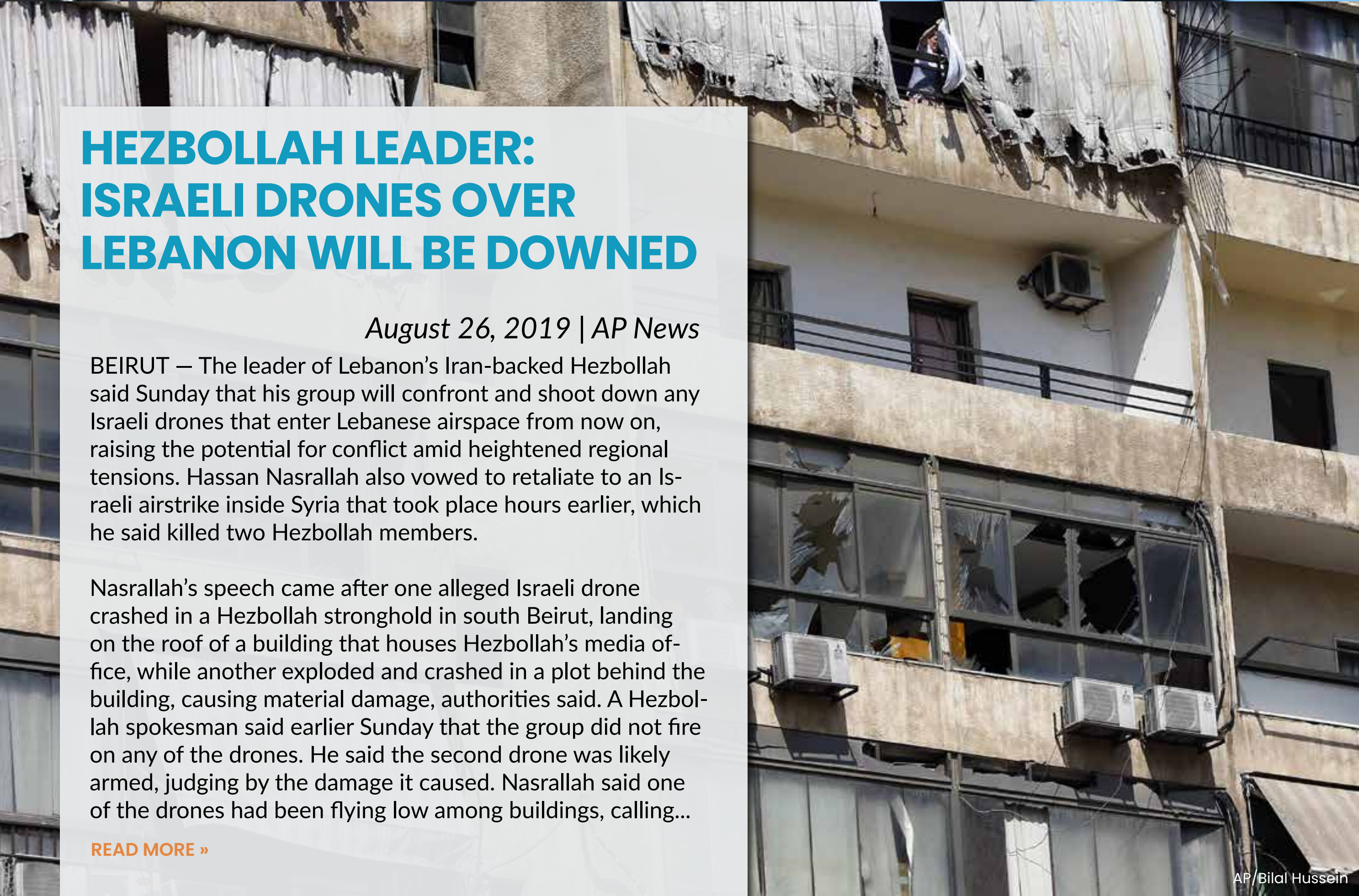
IRANIAN PRESIDENT: FIRST LIFT SANCTIONS, THEN LET’S TALK

August 27, 2019 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran’s president back-pedaled Tuesday on possible talks with Donald Trump, saying the U.S. president must first lift sanctions imposed on Tehran, otherwise a meeting between the two would be a mere photo op. Hassan Rouhani’s change of heart came a day after Trump said Monday that there’s a “really good chance” the two could meet on their nuclear impasse after a surprise intervention by French President Emmanuel Macron during the G-7 summit to try to bring Washington and Tehran together after decades of conflict.

“Without the U.S.’s withdrawal from sanctions, we will not witness any positive development,” Rouhani said in a televised speech on Tuesday, adding that Washington “holds the key” as to what happens next. “If someone intends to make it as just a photo op with Rouhani, that is not possible,” he said. Earlier on Monday, Rouhani expressed readiness to negotiate a way out of the crisis following America’s pullout from the...

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HEZBOLLAH LEADER: ISRAELI DRONES OVER LEBANON WILL BE DOWNED

August 26, 2019 | AP News

BEIRUT — The leader of Lebanon’s Iran-backed Hezbollah said Sunday that his group will confront and shoot down any Israeli drones that enter Lebanese airspace from now on, raising the potential for conflict amid heightened regional tensions. Hassan Nasrallah also vowed to retaliate to an Israeli airstrike inside Syria that took place hours earlier, which he said killed two Hezbollah members.

Nasrallah’s speech came after one alleged Israeli drone crashed in a Hezbollah stronghold in south Beirut, landing on the roof of a building that houses Hezbollah’s media office, while another exploded and crashed in a plot behind the building, causing material damage, authorities said. A Hezbollah spokesman said earlier Sunday that the group did not fire on any of the drones. He said the second drone was likely armed, judging by the damage it caused. Nasrallah said one of the drones had been flying low among buildings, calling...

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