



WEEKLY DIGEST
OCTOBER 18, 2019

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MAYOR SAYS NEWSOM SB 531 VETO IS 'HUGE VICTORY' FOR FRESNO

October 14, 2019 | Bill McEwen

Arguments made by Fresno Mayor Lee Brand and other local business leaders convinced Gov. Gavin Newsom to veto Senate Bill 531 on Saturday. SB 531, authored by state Sen. Steve Glazer (D-Orinda) would have stopped cities from offering sales-

SB 531, authored by state Sen. Steve Glazer (D-Orinda) would have stopped cities from offering sales-tax incentives as an economic development tool.

tax incentives as an economic development tool. "Current use of these tax agreements are limited but also an important local tool that

captures additional economic activity, particularly in rural and inland California cities that continue to face significant economic challenges like high unemployment rates," said Newsom in his veto message. "Therefore, completely removing these tax options from local decision-makers is the wrong approach."

Related Story: Editorial: Fresno Needs Tax Incentives, Not SB 531

Brand: Team Effort Produces 'Huge Victory'

Early on in the legislative process, Brand said, it appeared that "Fresno, other Valley cities and cities in the San Bernardino-Riverside area would get steamrolled" by Glazer's bill. "But when Glazer didn't want to compromise, we went to work talking with the governor's office and building a (coalition) of people opposed to the bill." Brand cited the work of his legislative analyst, John Ellis, and the city's Capitol lobbyist for their efforts leading to Newsom's veto. Eventually, other California cities, BizFed Central Valley and the Fresno Chamber of Commerce opposed SB 531. "Everybody worked together," Brand said. "We had to, it was almost like David and Goliath. This is a huge victory." Brand also praised Newsom for "keeping his

commitment" to improve the Valley economy. "We're finally getting Sacramento to pay attention to the Central Valley," he said. "The governor is a politician who follows through."

Newsom Signs Bill to Increase Tax-Sharing Transparency

Despite the veto, Newsom said that revenue-sharing agreements between cities and new businesses should be accompanied by increased oversight and transparency. In line with that belief, the governor signed Assembly Bill 485, authored by Assemblyman Jose Medina (D-Riverside). That bill, Newsom said, "will increase transparency regarding the economic outcomes that result from these types of agreements. This will allow the state to better understand the nature of the agreements between local jurisdictions and businesses, as well as the challenges and obstacles to inclusive growth." Glazer's bill would have prohibited future agreements, thus leaving in place contracts that Fresno has made with companies such as Amazon, Ulta, and The Gap.

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Fresno Deals Projected to Generate \$322.4 Million in New Tax Revenue

According to the city's projections, its contracts with Amazon, Ulta, and The Gap will provide Fresno's general fund with \$99 million over 30 years. Fresno County and Fresno Unified School District are reaping additional tax dollars as well. Over their lifetime, these three contracts are projected to generate \$322.4 million in new tax revenue for local...

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WITH BADGE AND STARS, ANDY HALL IS NOW FRESNO'S POLICE CHIEF

CHSU

October 16, 2019 | David Taub

City Hall may have been the safest place to be Wednesday morning. Dozens of police officers, from the prior chief down to the cadet, attended the swearing-in ceremony of new Chief Andy Hall. With his oath, Hall received the chief's badge, and four stars on each side of his collar, signifying his spot as the 22nd leader of the Fresno Police Department.

Hall succeeds Jerry Dyer, who officially retired after 18 years as chief and 40 years in the department. Likewise, Hall is a 40-year veteran, making his way up the ladder as a cadet, officer, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief, and now chief of the entire department. Most of the speeches included an element of humor. Mayor Lee Brand and Dyer zinged Hall; and Hall cracked jokes at his own expense. In his inaugural speech, Hall joked about getting the job, even though he didn't apply.

"You want to be the chief after the chief," he said, meaning it would be tough to follow Dyer. Brand and City Manager Wilma Quan selected Hall, after a nation-wide search did not produce a finalist to City Hall's liking. Hall talked about his vision. "I believe in community voices," Hall said, describing programs like youth mentoring and neighborhood watch. "I will always put this community first and I'm excited about the future of the Fresno Police Department as we set out on our next chapter."

When introducing Hall, Dyer joked that Hall — who operated the traffic division — was the department's first lieutenant and deputy chief to ride a police motorcycle, and would be the first chief to do so as well. Hall said it may not be a joke. "I still have a police motorcycle in my garage. It did get a little...

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GIANT PLANE THAT LED POW RESCUE MISSION COMING TO CASTLE AIR MUSEUM

October 14, 2019 | GV Wire

A military plane that played a pivotal role in a daring Vietnam War mission will make [Castle Air Museum in Atwater](#) its new home. Aircraft 0212, a Lockheed MC-130P outfitted for special operations, helped guide the daring 1970 [Son Tay Raid](#) to rescue prisoners of war being held captive in North Vietnam. The hulking turboprop Combat Shadow aircraft is being retired after a 50-year career with the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard. The plane is currently assigned to the Air Guard's [129th Rescue Wing](#) at Moffett Federal Airfield in Mountain View.

It will become part of Castle Air Museum's [permanent collection](#) following a special ceremony Oct. 26. The POW rescue mission, code-named [Operation Kingpin](#), was launched from Thailand and South Vietnam on the night of Nov. 20, 1970. The MC-130 was one of two guide planes that led a force of [Sikorsky Jolly Green Giant](#) combat helicopters, [A-1 Skyraider](#) attack planes, and 56 ground assault troops into hostile North Vietnam territory. It is considered by some experts as a model for special...

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California Air National Guard

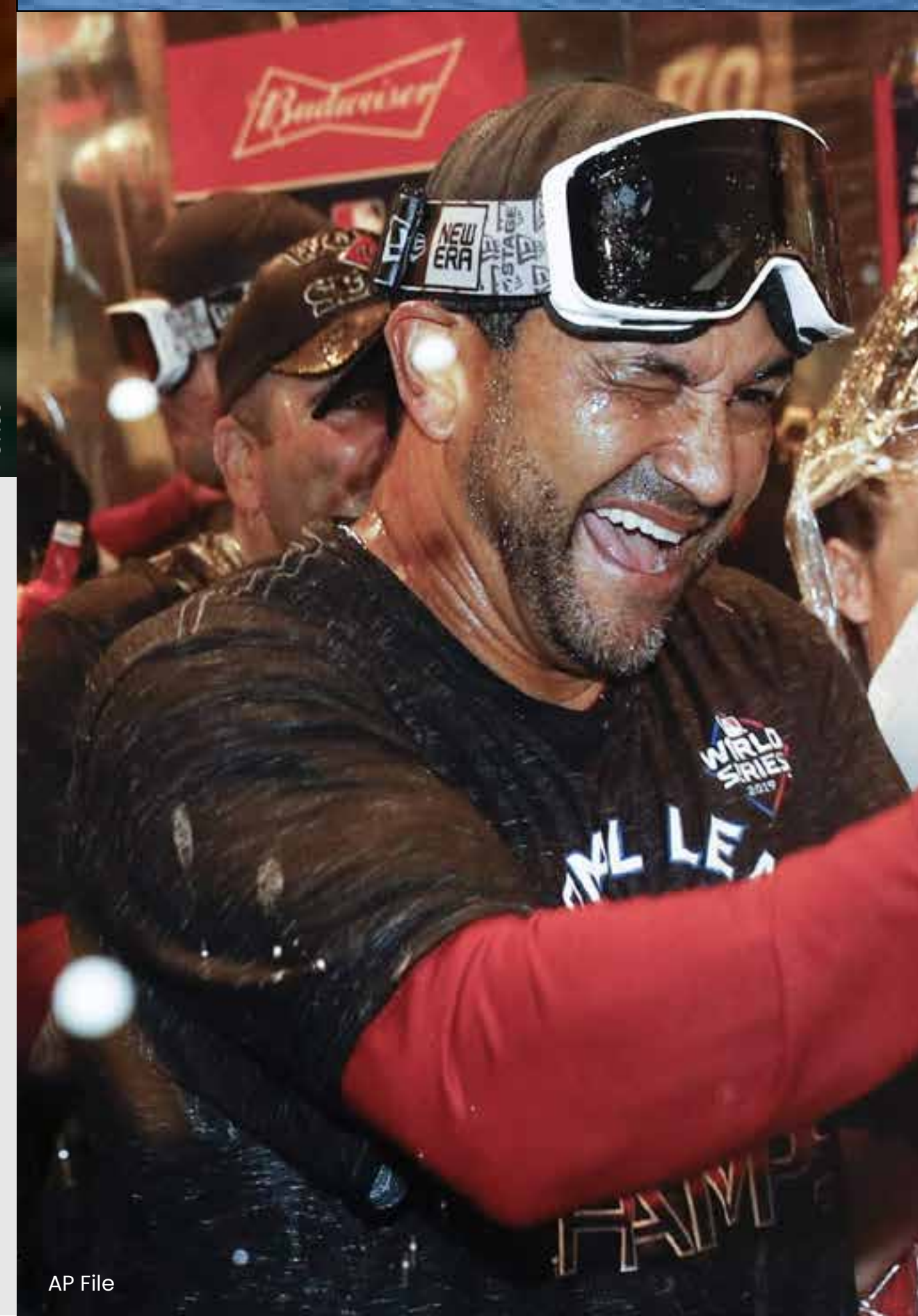
GRIZZLIES MAGIC: NATS' WIN MAKES IT 5 OF 10 FOR AAA TEAM

October 16, 2019 | David Taub

Are the Fresno Grizzlies the AAA team of the decade? For the fifth time in the last 10 seasons, the Major League parent club of the AAA Fresno Grizzlies will play in the World Series. And, if the Washington Nationals follow the success of the other clubs, a title could be coming to the nation's capital. Washington joins the San Francisco Giants (2010, 2012, 2014) and Houston Astros (2017) as Fresno's MLB partner playing for baseball's top prize. Those teams won every time this decade.

The Nationals, who finished a sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals on Tuesday night to win the National League Championship Series, will play the American League champion, either the Yankees or Astros. And, Fresno boasted its own title, winning the AAA National Championship in 2015. Since 1946, only five other cities have served as the top club for three different World Series participants: Columbus, Indianapolis, Oklahoma City, Portland, and Tacoma. When the Nationals signed...

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STATE NEWSOM SIGNS BILL PUSHING BACK PUBLIC SCHOOL START TIMES

October 14, 2019 | AP News

Students in middle school and high school can sleep in later beginning in 2022, thanks to legislation signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sunday. Senate Bill 328, which was authored by state Sen. Anthony Portantino, bans public high schools from starting before 8:30 a.m. It additionally requires middle schools to start no earlier than 8 a.m. The new law did carve out an exemption for rural districts because of bus scheduling challenges. Also excluded: so-called “zero periods,” which are optional courses offered before the regular school day begins.

The Effect on Fresno Unified

Fresno Unified Superintendent Bob Nelson said that while the district’s middle schools already start at 8 a.m. the high schools will have to change their start times.

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“We have to make sure we can get our kids to and from school from a transportation standpoint,” Nelson said. “We’re talking about what services we can provide for kids who might, in fact, come early to school. Like, do we have

an opportunity to get them homework help?”

[\(Click here to see Nelson’s full remarks.\)](#)

Bill Opposed by Teachers, School Districts

Teachers and school districts opposed the law, arguing the decision on when to start school should be left to local officials. And, a spokesman for the California School Boards Association told EdSource that the later start times would increase the need for childcare for “already cash-strapped families.” Bill’s Author Predicts

Better Grades, Healthier Children

But Portantino countered that “shifting to a later start

time will improve academic performance and save lives because it helps our children be healthier.” He characterized opponents as putting “our children’s health and welfare ahead of institutional bureaucracy resistant to change.”

A legislative analysis of the bill noted that various studies about the impacts of school start times over the past 15 years have had “wide variation in conclusions.”

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NEWSOM WANTS PG&E TO PAY POWERLESS CUSTOMERS \$100 EACH

AP File

October 15, 2019 | AP News

Gov. Gavin Newsom criticized PG&E for its performance during the largest planned power outage in California history to avoid wildfires and urged the utility to compensate affected customers with a bill credit or rebate worth \$100 for residential customers or \$250 for small businesses. Newsom said Monday that the shutoffs affected too many customers for too long, and it is clear PG&E implemented them “with astounding neglect and lack of preparation.”

PUC President: ‘Unacceptable Situation’
In addition, California’s top utility regulator blasted Pacific Gas and Electric for “failures in execution” that “created an

unacceptable situation that should never be repeated.” The agency ordered a series of corrective actions, including a goal of restoring power within 12 hours, not the utility’s current 48-hour goal.

In a letter to PG&E CEO Bill Johnson, California Public Utilities Commission President Marybel Batjer wrote: “The scope, scale, complexity, and overall impact to people’s lives, businesses, and the economy of this action cannot be understated,” Johnson responded with a letter of his own Monday. “We know there are areas where we fell short of our commitment to serving our customers during this unprecedented...

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AP/Ben Margot

GIANT PUMPKIN WEIGHING 2,175 POUNDS SETS CALIFORNIA RECORD

October 15, 2019 | AP News

HALF MOON BAY — A Northern California pumpkin hobbyist has won first place at the 46th annual Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh Off, setting a record for the largest in California. Leonardo Urena of Napa won \$15,000 Monday when his pumpkin logged 2,175 pounds.

Related Story: Big Fresno Fair: Master Carver Turns Pumpkins Into Art

Weigh-off spokesman Timothy Beeman says Urena’s pumpkin is the second largest in the contest’s history. A pumpkin from Washington state weighed nearly 2,400 pounds and won in Half Moon Bay in 2017. The 51-year-old says he took up the hobby in 2000 and says he enjoys the pumpkin growing community. He also won the Half Moon Bay contest in 2011. Urena says he always tells his pumpkins he’s proud of them and he encourages them to keep growing...

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CONSERVATIONISTS SEEK PROTECTION OF CALIFORNIA JOSHUA TREES

October 15, 2019 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — A conservation organization has petitioned for protection of the western Joshua tree under the California Endangered Species Act due to the effects of climate change and habitat destruction.

The Center for Biological Diversity filed the petition with the state Fish and Game Commission on Tuesday. The request comes amid rising concern about the future of the distinctive trees with spikey leaves that have come to symbolize the Mojave Desert and draw throngs to Joshua Tree National park.

The petition asks that the western Joshua tree be given “threatened” status under the act, meaning it is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of the special protection and management efforts...

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DEBATE TAKEAWAYS: WARREN ATTACKED, 70S CLUB AVOIDS AGE ISSUE

October 16, 2019 | AP News

A dozen Democratic presidential candidates participated in a spirited debate over health care, taxes, gun control and impeachment. Takeaways from the three-hour forum in Westerville, Ohio:

Warren's Rise Attracts Attacks

Sen. Elizabeth Warren found Tuesday that her rise in the polls may come with a steep cost. She's now a clear target for attacks, particularly from more moderate

**"I don't think the American people are wrong when they say what they want is a choice."
— Mayor Pete Buttigieg**

challengers, and her many plans are now being subjected to much sharper scrutiny. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete

Buttigieg slammed her for not acknowledging, as Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has, that middle-class taxes would increase under the single-payer health plan she and Sanders favor. "At least Bernie's being honest with this," Klobuchar said. "I don't think the American people are wrong when they say what they want is a choice," Buttigieg told Warren. His plan maintains private insurance but would allow people to buy into Medicare. Candidates also pounced on Warren's suggestion that only she and Sanders want to take on billionaires while the rest of the field wants to protect them. Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke told Warren it didn't seem as though she wanted to lift people up and she is "more focused on being punitive." And they piled onto her signature proposal, a 2% wealth tax to raise the trillions of dollars needed for many of her ambitious proposals. Technology entrepreneur Andrew Yang noted that such a measure has failed in almost every European country where it's been tried. Sen. Kamala Harris of California even went after Warren for not backing Harris' call for Twitter to ban President Donald Trump.

That 70's Show

The stage included three 70-something candidates who

would be the oldest people ever elected to a first term as president — including 78-year-old Sanders, who had a heart attack this month. Moderators asked all three how they could do the job. None really addressed the question. Sanders invited the public to a major rally he's planning in New York City next week and vowed to take the fight to corporate elites. Biden promised to release his medical records before the Iowa caucuses next year and said he was running because the country needs an elder statesman in the White House after Trump. Warren, whose campaign has highlighted her hours-long sessions posing for selfies with supporters, promised to "out-organize and outlast" any other candidate, including Trump. Then she pivoted to her campaign argument that Democrats need to put forth big ideas rather than return to the past, a dig at Biden.

One Voice on Impeachment

The opening question was a batting practice fastball for the Democratic candidates: Should Trump be impeached? They were in steadfast agreement. All 12 of them. Largely with variations on the word "corrupt" to describe the Republican president. Warren was asked first if voters should decide whether Trump should stay in office. She responded, "There are decisions that are bigger than politics." Biden, who followed Sanders, offered a rare admission: "I agree with Bernie." The only hint of dissonance came from Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, who was one of the last Democratic House members to back an impeachment inquiry. She lamented that some Democrats had been calling for Trump's impeachment since right after the 2016 election, undermining the party's case against him. Klobuchar has faded into the...

"We've got one shot to make Donald Trump a one-term president and how we talk about each other in this debate actually really matters. Tearing each other down because we have a different plan is unacceptable." — Sen. Cory Booker

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AHEAD OF 2020, FB ENSNARED IN HEATED POLITICAL CLIMATE

AP File

October 15, 2019 | AP News

Mark Zuckerberg defended meetings he's reportedly had with conservative leaders after #DeleteFacebook began trending on social media. Politico reported this week that the Facebook CEO held private meetings with, among others, Fox News' Tucker Carlson and conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt.

Conservatives have long accused Facebook of suppressing conservative political view and the company has tried to dispel that belief. Zuckerberg says he meets with many people "across the spectrum on lots of different issues."

Related Story: Biden, Warren, Sanders Face Scrutiny at Democratic Debate

"Meeting new people and hearing from a wide range of viewpoints is part of learning," Zuckerberg wrote in a Facebook post. "If you haven't tried it, I suggest you do!" Facebook has fought allegations since the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election that it's not doing enough to stop bogus accounts and political ads on its platform. Those charges are **surfacing again** ahead of the 2020 election, with Democratic candidates Joe Biden and Sen. Elizabeth Warren...

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NASA via AP

FIRST ALL-FEMALE SPACEWALKING TEAM MAKES HISTORY

October 18, 2019 | AP News

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The world's first all-female spacewalking team made history high above Earth on Friday, replacing a broken part of the International Space Station's power grid. As NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir completed the job with wrenches, screwdrivers and power-grip tools, it marked the first time in a half-century of spacewalking that men weren't part of the action. They insisted they were just doing their job after years of training.

"We don't want to take too much credit because there have been many others — female spacewalkers — before us. This is just the first time that there have been two women outside at the same time ... For us, this is really just us doing our job." America's first female spacewalker from 35 years ago, Kathy Sullivan, was delighted. She said it's good to finally have enough women in the astronaut corps and trained...

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JOE BIDEN'S SON HUNTER STEPPING DOWN FROM CHINESE BOARD

October 14, 2019 | AP News

NEW YORK — Facing intense scrutiny from President Donald Trump and his Republican allies, Hunter Biden says he will step down from the board of directors of a Chinese-backed private equity firm at the end of the month as part of a pledge not to work on behalf of any foreign-owned companies should his father win the presidency.

Biden, the 49-year-old son of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, revealed his plan Sunday in an internet post written by his attorney, George Mesires, who outlined a defense of the younger Biden's work in Ukraine and China, which has emerged as one of Trump's chief lines of attack against Hunter's father despite no proof of impropriety. "Hunter makes the following commitment: Under a Biden Administration, Hunter will readily comply with any and all guidelines or standards a President Biden may issue to address purported conflicts of interest, or the appearance of...

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AP/Leventis Pitarakis

WORLD

SYRIA KURDS ACCUSE TURKEY OF VIOLATING CEASE-FIRE

October 18, 2019 | Nancy Price

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey — The Kurdish-led administration in northern Syria accused Turkey on Friday of violating a U.S.-brokered cease-fire that went into effect overnight, as fighters from both sides clashed in and around a border town that has been one of the fiercest fronts in the Turkish invasion.

In its statement, the Kurdish-led administration said Turkey “has not adhered with the cease-fire until now in some areas,” particularly in Ras al-Ayn.

The town of Ras al-Ayn was emerging as an immediate test for the five-day cease-fire agreed on by Washington and Ankara. Before the deal’s announcement, Turkish-backed forces had encircled the town and were battling fierce resistance from Kurdish fighters inside. The Syrian Kurds raised further uncertainty over a cease-fire deal that already was vague on key points and left significant questions unanswered. The self-rule administration said some provisions of the cease-fire deal “need further discussion with the United States.” It did not specify which provisions, but the Kurds have not publicly committed to a central term of the deal — a pullout of their fighters from the border region. A spokesman for the Kurdish-led fighters said Friday they were not withdrawing from Ras al-Ayn because Turkish forces are still besieging and shelling it. Criticism of the cease-fire deal — which President Donald Trump called “a great day for civilization” — mounted. EU Council President Donald Tusk said it was “not a cease-fire, it is a demand for the capitulation of the Kurds” and called on Turkey to immediately halt its operation in northeast Syria. French President Emmanuel Macron called the Turkish operation “madness.”

Other Activists Reported a New Exodus of Civilians From the Villages

Turkish shelling hit in and around Ras al-Ayn on Friday morning, raising columns of smoke, seen by an Associated Press journalist in Ceylanpinar on the Turkish side of the border, but none was seen after 10:30 a.m., and

only sporadic gunfire was heard from inside the town. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the Rojava Information Center said fighting continued into the afternoon as Turkish-backed Syrian fighters clashed with Kurdish forces in villages on the outskirts of Ras al-Ayn. The Kurdish-led force said five of its fighters were killed and a number of civilians wounded in a Turkish airstrike on one of the villages. Other activists reported a new exodus of civilians from the villages. Gun battles and shelling continued around a hospital in the center of Ras al-Ayn, and those injured inside could not be evacuated, said Mustafa Bali, spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

The Kurdish Red Crescent said it was unable to enter the town to evacuate the wounded because of fighting. Kurdish fighters said the fighting quieted around 4 p.m. In its statement, the Kurdish-led administration said Turkey “has not adhered with the cease-fire until now in some areas,” particularly in Ras al-Ayn. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan denied any fighting took place Friday and said Kurdish fighters had begun withdrawing, a claim the Kurds denied. A senior U.S. official said they were awaiting confirmation on the reported fighting. The official said it takes time for information to filter down to field units especially for forces without strong command and control. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Pence Said the U.S. Was Already Coordinating With It on a Withdrawal

The cease-fire agreement — reached after hours of negotiations in Turkey’s capital between Erdogan and U.S. Vice President Mike Pence — requires the Kurdish fighters to vacate a swath of territory in Syria along the Turkish border. That arrangement would largely solidify the position Turkey has gained after days of fighting. The Turks and the Kurds appear to disagree on the...

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BREXIT TALKS INCH TOWARD TENTATIVE DEAL AHEAD OF SUMMIT

AP/Francisco Seco

October 16, 2019 | AP News

BRUSSELS — The European Union and Britain were inching closer to a tentative Brexit divorce deal that leaders would seek to close at a summit meeting Thursday. Hopes were increasingly turning toward getting a broad political commitment, with the full legal details hammered out later. Negotiators were locked in EU headquarters with few details leaking out. Wild movements in the British pound on Wednesday underscored the uncertainty over what, if anything, might be decided.

Meetings between EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier and key EU legislators as well as with ambassadors of the mem-

ber nations were rescheduled for the evening — an indication there was still momentum in the ongoing talks among technical teams from both sides. “It looks like things are moving,” said an EU official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because talks were still ongoing.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s spokesman, James Slack, echoed that, saying there is still “a chance of securing a good deal” at the summit, even though a number of issues remain. The thorniest among them is how goods and people will flow across the land border between EU member Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K. But...

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AP File

PAKISTAN FACES BLACKLISTING AS A COUNTRY THAT FINANCES TERRORISM

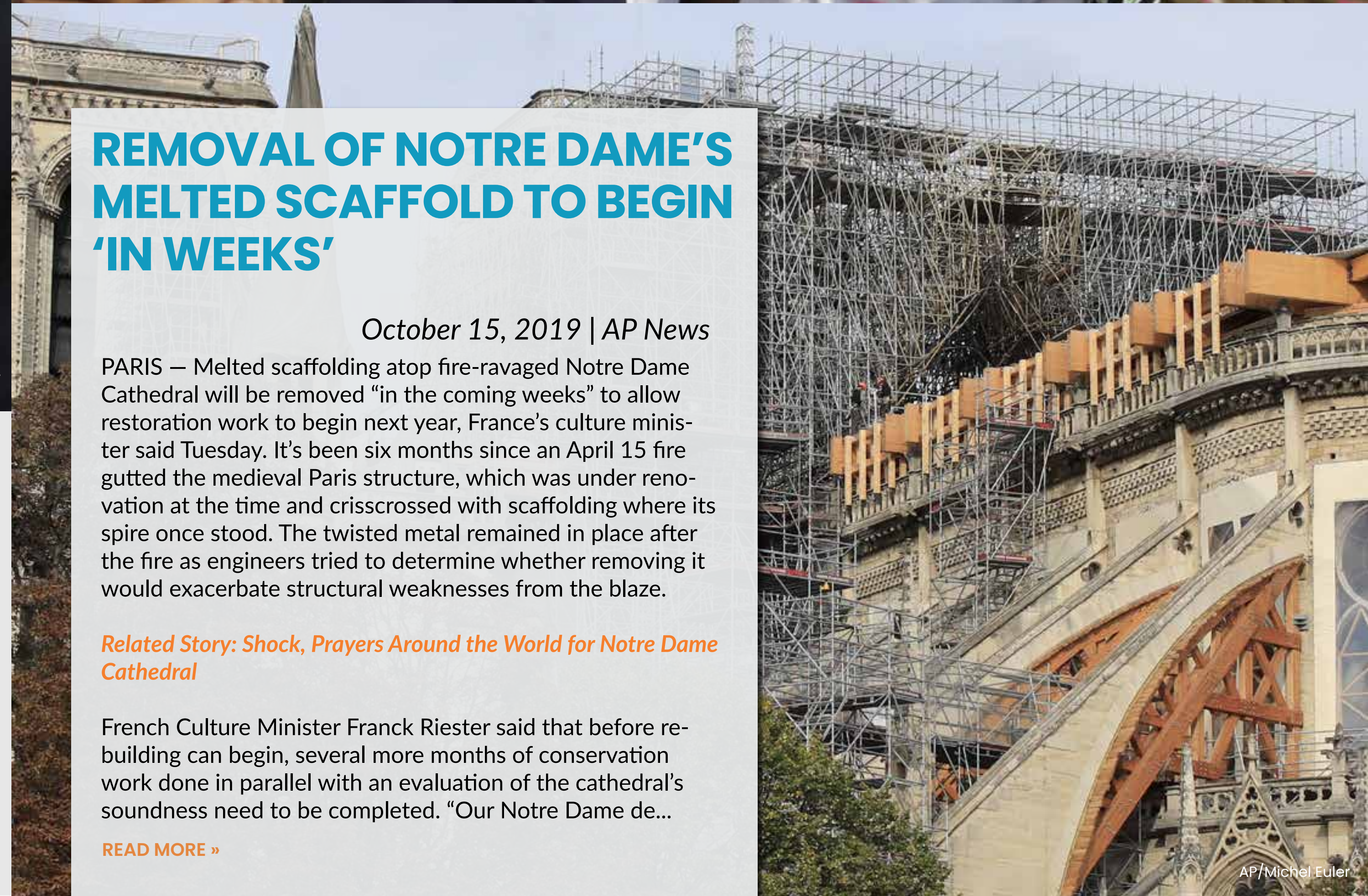
October 15, 2019 | AP News

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan is trying to avoid getting blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force, a global watchdog, when it meets Wednesday in Paris. A report earlier this month by the task force’s Asia Pacific Group, which monitors Pakistan’s progress, is not encouraging. The report says Pakistan has fully implemented only one item from a list of 40 measures that the country should be taking to curb terrorist financing and money laundering. The other 39 measures were either partially implemented or in some cases overlooked entirely.

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Iran and North Korea are currently the only two countries on the blacklist. Being blacklisted would be a serious blow for Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan as he tries to boost its faltering economy and attract foreign investment and loans...

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REMOVAL OF NOTRE DAME’S MELTED SCAFFOLD TO BEGIN ‘IN WEEKS’

October 15, 2019 | AP News

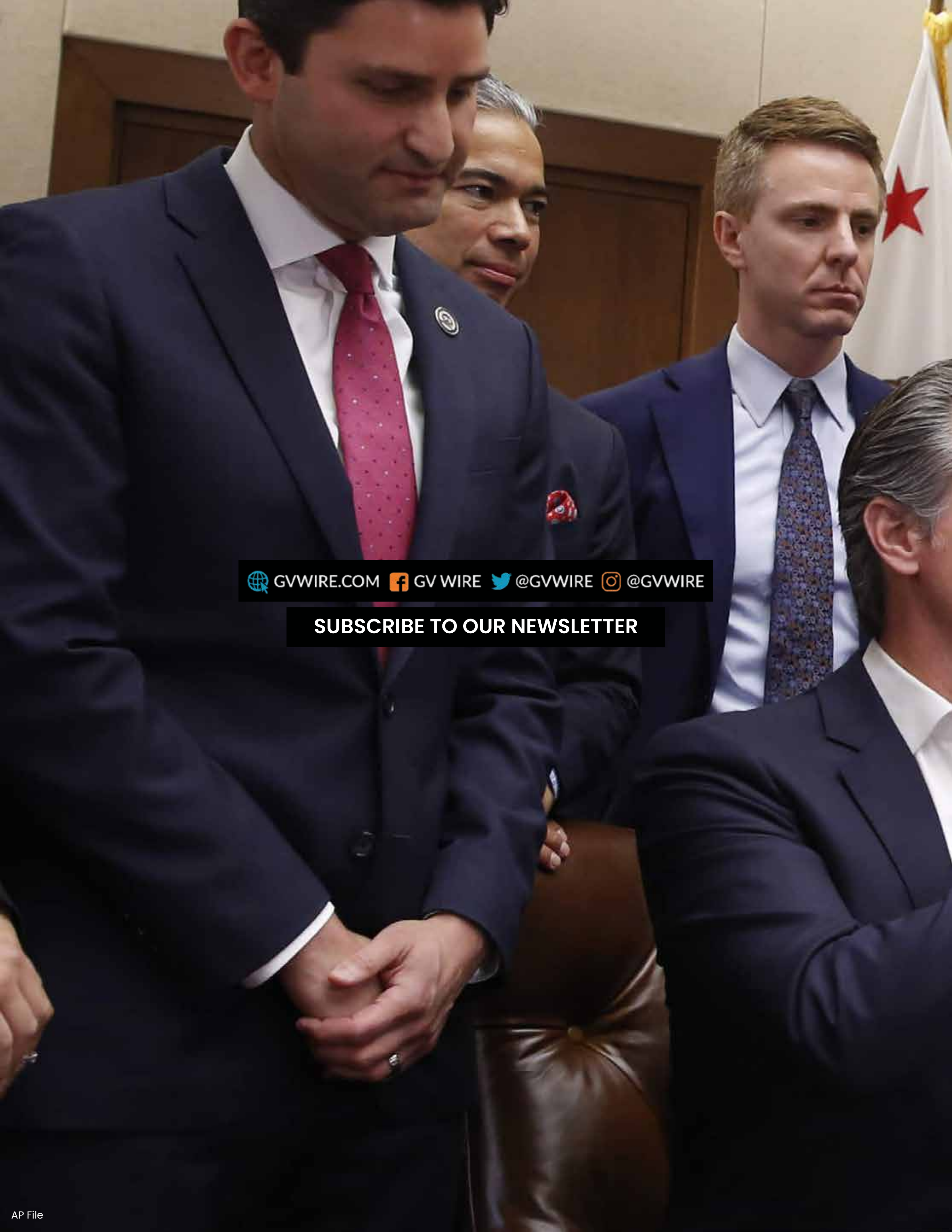
PARIS — Melted scaffolding atop fire-ravaged Notre Dame Cathedral will be removed “in the coming weeks” to allow restoration work to begin next year, France’s culture minister said Tuesday. It’s been six months since an April 15 fire gutted the medieval Paris structure, which was under renovation at the time and crisscrossed with scaffolding where its spire once stood. The twisted metal remained in place after the fire as engineers tried to determine whether removing it would exacerbate structural weaknesses from the blaze.





Related Story: Shock, Prayers Around the World for Notre Dame Cathedral

French Culture Minister Franck Riester said that before rebuilding can begin, several more months of conservation work done in parallel with an evaluation of the cathedral’s soundness need to be completed. “Our Notre Dame de...

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AP/Michel Euler



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