

FRESNO IS THE FUTURE, GOV. NEWSOM'S ECONOMIC ADVISER SAYS

November 7, 2019 | David Taub

Gov. Gavin Newsom's chief economic adviser believes in Fresno. As the California Economic Summit convened at the downtown Double Tree Hotel ballroom, an estimated 900 attendees from around the state listened to what makes Fresno tick. And

"There's no silver bullet. It has to be a combination of economic development, human capital investment, and ensuring we are connecting the community so the growth that happens is more inclusive in creating opportunities for everyone." — Lenny Mendonca, Governor's Chief Economic Adviser

holding it here is key for Lenny Mendon-ca. "It's incredibly important that the Economic Summit is in places where the future of California is and representing both the opportunities and challenges in the state of California," Mendonca said. "Peo-

ple are thirsting for real conversation about how do we move the economy forward in a way that is vibrant, inclusive, sustainable, and Fresno is the place that is pushing that conversation forward.

Fresno Showcase

Agriculture, of course, is a significant driver in the region's economy. At a panel session called "The Fresno Showcase," Fresno Farm Bureau CEO Ryan Jacobsen succinctly summarized the formula for success in his industry and others.

Related Story: California Economic Summit in Fresno Is Biggest Ever

"Water is the magic ingredient," Jacobsen told the audience. He added that labor shortages continue to be a problem, asking for comprehensive immigration reform. Lee Ann Eager, CEO of the Fresno Economic Development Corporation, said more space is needed to develop industrial parks. Other common themes, heard from former Fresno mayor

— and current head of the Central Valley Community Foundation — Ashley Swearengin and others, were the three "bottom line E's": economy, environment, and equity. At another presentation, a newly formed group called Fresno DRIVE (Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy) unveiled its goal to see \$4 billion invested in the Fresno area over the next 10 years. The plan calls for using the money in economic development, human capital, and neighborhood development, with an eye on racial equity. However, where the \$4 billion comes from is still being discussed.

Fresno is Telling Its Story

Micah Weinberg, CEO of California Forward — the group responsible for the summit — hopes that booking the event in Fresno will place a focus on how state policy impacts the economies of the various regions. "it's really difficult to know about the different regions, if you don't go to the different re-

gions," Weinberg said.
"(Fresno) is really telling its story to the rest
of the state through
this event." There's
no simple solution to
overcoming Fresno's
economic challenges,
according to Mendonca. "There's no silver

At the summit, the governor's office announced a \$13 million investment in the San Joaquin Valley for volunteerism. The money will help fund AmeriCorps, and also offer \$10,000 educational scholarships for those who volunteer for a year.

bullet. It has to be a combination of economic development, human capital investment, and ensuring we are connecting the community so the growth that happens is more inclusive in creating opportunities for everyone." Weinberg said the summit is having a positive economic impact on Fresno, at least in the short term. "We are hitting a lot of the local restaurants and breweries," Weinberg said. "We just really appreciate the extent to which Fresno has...

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November 5, 2019 | Nathan Magsig

The issue of homelessness in Fresno County is not new, having been a part of our community since our foundation more than a century ago. However, an issue once seen as a blight or nuisance limited to specific pockets of our county has followed in the steps of our state and much of the country, exploding into a legitimate crisis and threatening to grow exponentially unless meaningful, immediate action is taken.

Today, respected nonprofits and faith-based groups throughout our communities – including Fresno Rescue Mission, Poverello House, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, Breaking the Chains, and others — are providing direct support and resources for individuals and families affected by the homelessness crisis. It's a tremendous effort that no one entity can take on alone with any hope of making progress. This is why so many are coming together to tackle an issue that affects us all. To address the complexities and challenges of the homelessness crisis here in our own backyard, the county, cities, and community-based organizations have banded together to align our services and approach. In June, the county of Fresno, with input and support from all cities, adopted 14 priorities which set the foundation for addressing homelessness.

In October, the Board of Supervisors approved the founding structure of Street2Home (S2H) Fresno County, which will serve as the countywide collective impact initiative to maintain focus on our adopted homelessness priorities. Street2Home will coordinate with designated city representatives, the Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care, and the Fresno Housing...

FRESNO POLICE CHIEF
SEARCH TEAM WILL INCLUDE
3 COUNCILMEN

November 7, 2019 | Bill McEwen

Fresno Mayor Lee Brand has blessed a request that the city council have a larger role in the search for Andy Hall's successor as police chief. The compromise forged by the mayor and councilman Nelson Esparza comes amid lingering controversy about Hall's appointment after the retirement of longtime chief Jerry Dyer last month. Hall never applied for the job and, with more than 40 years in the department, must retire by spring 2021.

City Hall also is dealing with community criticism stemming from a video released last month showing an officer fatally shooting a fleeing teen in the back of the head. Brand and Esparza issued a joint news release Thursday morning about selecting the next police chief — which Brand has vowed to do before his term expires in January 2021. "Councilmember Esparza and I have discussed these issues in great detail and based on these conversations, I have decided to add three city councilmembers to the first-round interview panels when we are selecting the next police chief," Brand said. There will be...



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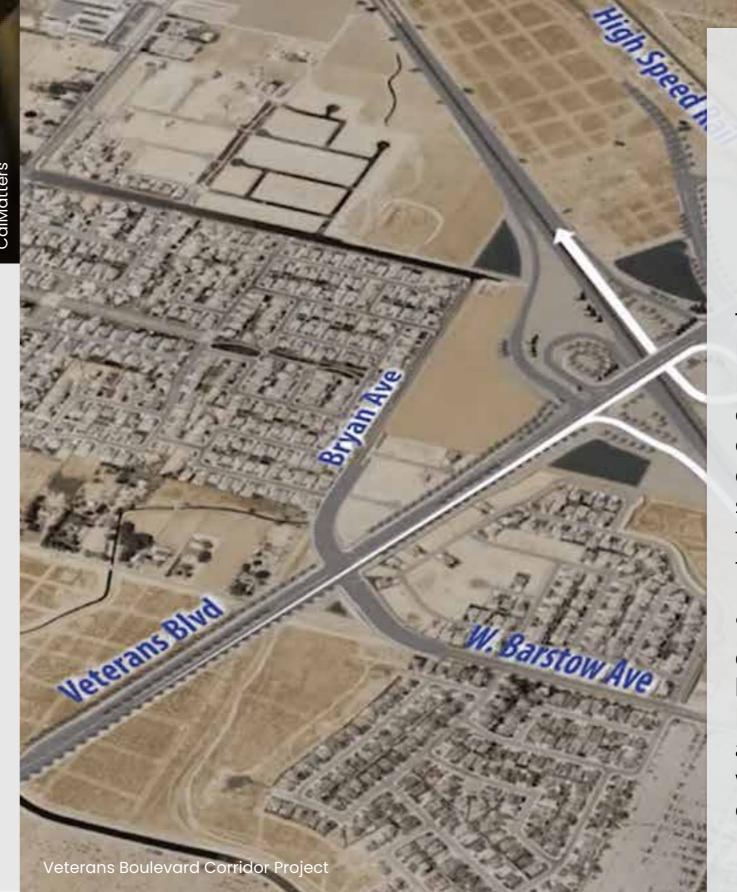
FEDS SAY YES TO VETERANS BOULEVARD'S FINAL PIECE OF FUNDING

November 6, 2019 | GV Wire

The final funding piece for a key roadway project in northwest Fresno, planned for decades, finally came through. The U.S. Dept. of Transportation awarded the Veterans Boulevard Project a \$10.5 BUILD Grant on Wednesday for a project with an estimated total cost of \$139 million. With the first segment completed and bidding underway on the all-important second segment — grade separations for the Union Pacific railroad tracks and the high-speed rail corridor — city officials expect the complete 2.5- mile project to be open for traffic in 2023.

"(It) is fantastic news for the Central Valley. The grant will reduce congestion at the Veterans Boulevard Interchange and better connect the Valley's rural communities with Fresno," Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Tulare) said via email. When completed, Veterans Boulevard will connect Herndon Avenue to Shaw Avenue, with an interchange at Highway 99, in a heavily congested part of town. Residents have long complained about the...

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FLAMES, GEAR AND RISKS OF PHOTOGRAPHING CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

November 4, 2019 | Marcio Sanchez, AP News

SANTA PAULA — It's ironic, but momentarily forgetting some of my safety gear ended up saving my life. It happened as I drove late Thursday into the heart of a wildfire that had erupted near the city of Santa Paula, a two-hour drive west of Los Angeles. This was one of the dozens of blazes that have been springing up daily in Northern and Southern California the last couple

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ciated Press in 2002, and

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- AP photojournalist

Marcio Sanchez

me, they could tell her."

have had other near-

weeks, an indication that we are now in the middle of wildfire season.

Dressed in flame-resistant clothes, heavy boots and carrying my two cameras, I spent a few minutes walking around and surveying the scene before starting to shoot photos. To get the best shots, you first need to fully understand a situation, everything from where firefighters are working to the winds.

After a few minutes, I realized I had forgotten my helmet and fire shelter, essentially a tarp that can be deployed to cover and protect your body if you can't escape flames. So I began walking back to my car, and a few minutes later two large burning branches crashed in the exact place where I had been standing.

I have been covering wildfires since I began working with The Associated Press in 2002, and have had other near-death experiences. Still, the close call this week was so unnerving that I called my editor and a fellow photographer to make sure both had my wife's phone number. If something happened to me, they could tell her. Unlike many states that limit access, in many situations California law allows journalists to get as close

as they want to the flames. This allows us to capture stunning images of the ferocious burning that in sec-

onds can incinerate houses and kill people, but that access comes with risks. I always tell my wife about the dangers, but I don't talk about them with my

Unlike many states that limit access, in many situations California law allows journalists to get as close as they want to the flames.

sons, ages 17 and 15. I don't want them to worry, and I do take many precautions. I've had wildfire training, I have high-quality protective gear and I carry only two cameras, part of staying light on my feet to move as conditions change.

When friends ask what it's like to cover wildfires, the first thing I say is that there is nothing glamorous. It's smoky, it's hellishly hot and it's dangerous. I can't even say that I "like" covering them. Instead, like others on the AP's photo team, I see doing this as a duty to show the world what is happening. I'm no expert on climate change, but with each passing year I'm more convinced that climatic shifts are driving the fires to new levels. They are more frequent, more intense and more unpredictable.

If there is anything to be optimistic about, it's that fire-fighters seem to be getting better at fighting the blazes. They also conduct themselves with a clear sense of mission. At the fire where I was nearly crushed by torched branches, at one point I watched four fire-fighters boldly take on a giant wave of flames. I don't know if this year's fire season will be more or less severe than previous years; If the last few weeks are any indication, we may be in for a rough couple of months. Whatever happens, my teammates and I will be ready.

Follow Marcio Sanchez: www.twitter.com/MarcioSanchez06

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November 6, 2019 | AP News

PARADISE — There was "no way in hell" Victoria Sinclaire was rebuilding in Paradise. She'd thought she was going to die during the six hours it took her to escape the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history. The town where she'd raised her family was nearly wiped out, two of her three cats had disappeared into the flames, and she "was done."

Sinclaire and tens of thousands of others in nearby communities fled the wind-whipped inferno that killed 85 people and incinerated roughly 19,000 homes, businesses and other buildings on Nov. 8, 2018. Despite her vow to stay away,

Sinclaire's family was one of the first to rebuild, braving the enduring threat of wildfires, and now, repeated power outages as the nation's largest utility tries to prevent its equipment from sparking blazes on windy days like it did in Paradise a year ago.

Weeks after the fire, Sinclaire had an epiphany when she returned to the ruins of her home, where she raised a daughter and nearly two dozen foster children over eight years. Even rescue groups eventually found her two missing cats. "There was a wind that was blowing through what was left of my trees, and I just felt a calmness. I just felt more peace than...

CALIFORNIA DEPUTIES HELP DUMPSTER-DIVING BEAR ESCAPE

November 6, 2019 | AP News

KINGS BEACH — Sheriff's deputies in Northern California have helped a massive dumpster-diving bear get out of a sticky situation. Placer County sheriff's deputies found the bear trapped Monday in a locked trash bin in Kings Beach, on Lake Tahoe's northern shore.

Video the agency posted to Facebook shows a deputy shining a flashlight on the dumpster and the bear suddenly popping its head out. As the startled deputy jumps back, others laugh and say "whoa!"

They recognize it as the bear they've dubbed "T-Shirt" for a patch of white fur on its chest. The agency says the animal has had run-ins with deputies before. They unlock the dumpster from a distance and fling open one of the doors. The bear is stuck in a smaller opening in the top of one of the doors, but eventually drops down, pushes it open and...

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CALIFORNIA ILLEGAL POT SEIZURES TOP \$1.5 BILLION IN VALUE

November 4, 2019 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — Authorities seized more than \$1.5 billion worth of illegally grown marijuana plants in California this year as part of an annual eradication program, officials said Monday. The raids netted more than 950,000 plants from nearly 350 growing operation sites this year through the "Campaign Against Marijuana Planting" program, an effort known as "CAMP" that dates to 1983 and is considered the nation's largest illegal marijuana eradication program.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said nearly 150 people were arrested statewide and 168 weapons were seized during the execution of more than 120 search warrants. The state partners with local and federal agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration, to target growing operations on public lands. Officials said they encountered sophisticated growing operations that help fuel the state's large black market, where consumers can avoid steep tax rates by...

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CONGRESS APPROVES BILL **EXPANDING ANIMAL CRUELTY LAW**

November 6, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Congress has passed a bill making certain types of animal cruelty a federal felony. The bill would expand a 2010 law that made creation or distribution of so-called "animal crushing" videos illegal. The new bill would make the underlying acts of cruelty a federal crime.

The Senate unanimously passed the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act on Tuesday, two weeks after the House passed it on a voice vote. Florida Reps. Ted Deutch and Vern Buchanan sponsored the bill. Deutch, a Democrat, said it "sends a clear message that our society does not accept cruelty against animals" and noted that the bill was received overwhelming support from both parties. Buchanan, a Republican, said "the torture of innocent animals is abhorrent and should be punished to the fullest extent of the law."

The bill now goes to President Donald Trump.

Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at the advocacy group Animal Wellness Action, said the measure was long overdue.

The PACT Act Would Prohibit Extreme Acts of Cruelty "We as a nation should have no tolerance for animal

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abuse, and the PACT Act will allow federal authorities to stop heinous crimes when they occur on the federal level," Gann said in a statement.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa.,

who shepherded the bill with Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., called it a major victory to stop animal cruelty and make communities safer. "Evidence shows that the deranged individuals who harm animals often move on

to committing acts of violence against people. It is appropriate that the federal government have strong animal cruelty laws and penalties,' Toomey said in a statement.

"There's no place in a civilized society for maiming and

torturing animals period," Blumenthal added.

The PACT Act would prohibit extreme acts of cruelty when they occur in interstate commerce or on federal property and cracks down on

"We as a nation should have no tolerance for animal abuse, and the PACT Act will allow federal authorities to stop heinous crimes when they occur on the federal level." — Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at the advocacy group Animal Wellness Ac-

sexual abuse of animals. While current federal law bans the sale or distribution of videos showing animals being crushed, burned or tortured, it does not prohibit the underlying conduct.

Law enforcement agencies including the National Sheriffs' Association and Fraternal Order of Police endorsed the bill, citing a well-documented connection between animal cruelty and violence against people.

The act is limited to interstate commerce and federal property and would not interfere with local animal cruelty laws or enforcement, supporters said.



VOTERS DECIDE ON SANCTUARY CITY, AIRBNB RENTALS

November 6, 2019 | AP News

Voters in the West took a dim view of taxes, while New Yorkers backed a new way to elect some of their leaders and a New Jersey city cracked down on Airbnb. Tucson voters seemed uninterested in becoming a sanctuary city, and those in Washington weighed whether to roll back limits on affirmative action. Across the country, ballot measures gave voters a chance to weigh in on a wide range of issues. Among the highlights:

Arizona

Tucson voters overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to designate their town as Arizona's only sanctuary city. The decision in one of Arizona's most liberal cities is a relief for the Democrats who control city government. They worry the initiative would jeopardize millions of dollars in state and federal funding and put public safety at risk. The initiative was a direct...

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November 6, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — "I now do recall." With that stunning reversal, diplomat Gordon Sondland handed House impeachment investigators another key piece of corroborating testimony Tuesday. He acknowledged what Democrats contend was a clear quid pro quo, pushed by President Donald Trump and his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, with Ukraine.

Sondland, in an addendum to his sworn earlier testimony, said that military assistance to the East European ally was being withheld until Ukraine's new president agreed to release a statement about fighting corruption as Trump want-

ed. Sondland said he was the one who carried the message to a Ukrainian official on the sidelines of a conference in Warsaw with Vice President Mike Pence.

"I said that resumption of U.S. aid would likely not occur until Ukraine provided the public anti-corruption statement that we had been discussing for many weeks," Sondland recalled. His three-page update, tucked beneath hundreds of pages of sworn testimony from Sondland and former Ukraine Special Envoy Kurt Volker, was released by House investigators as Democrats prepared to push the closed-door sessions...

FROM TOAST OF TOWN TO TOXIC: FACEBOOK CEO ON OUTS WITH DEMS

November 4, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Mark Zuckerberg's social network in Washington is shrinking. Bipartisan hostility against Facebook has been building for months, fueled by a series of privacy scandals, the site's role in Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign and accusations that Facebook crushes competitors. Now, with the 2020 elections approaching, Democrats especially are homing in on the conduct of the social media giant and its refusal to fact-check political ads and remove false ones.

"When you're the No. 1 monopoly, people are going to come after you," says John Feehery, a veteran Republican communications strategist. The challenge for Democrats, as he sees it: "They're facing a base that is very angry and restive. So they have to be much more aggressive in taking on corporations." Zuckerberg enjoyed a cozy relationship with the Obama administration. But in the face of growing public...

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DEADLY AMBUSH ON AMERICANS SHOWS MEXICO LOST CONTROL OF AREA

November 6, 2019 | AP News

COLONIA LEBARON, Mexico — When drug cartel gunmen opened fire on American women and children in northern Mexico, the Mexican Army, the National Guard and Sonora state police were not there to protect them. It took them about eight hours just to arrive.

"The country is suffering very much from violence. You see it all over. And it ain't getting better. It's getting worse." — William Stubbs, a pecan and alfalfa farmer who serves on a community security committee in the American-dominated hamlet of Colonia LeBaron

To villagers and others, the bloodshed seemed to demonstrate once more that the government has lost control over vast areas of the country to the drug traffickers. "The country is suffering very much from violence," said William Stubbs, a pecan and alfalfa farmer who serves on a

community security committee in the American-dominated hamlet of Colonia LeBaron. "You see it all over. And it ain't getting better. It's getting worse."

The lack of law enforcement in rural areas like the northern states of Chihuahua and Sonora once led the dual U.S.-Mexican residents of places like Colonia LeBaron to form their own civilian defense patrols. Stubbs said that after the 2009 killing of anti-crime activist Benjamin LeBaron, residents positioned themselves each night for two years with high-powered binoculars to keep watch from the large "L" for "LeBaron" that stands on a hillside above the town. Since then, he said, the cartels have left Le Baron and the town of Galeana a few kilometers to the north alone. But he said they have watched the cartels get stronger in the past two decades, with nearby communities in the mountains suffering from violence and extortion.

Nearest Government Security Force Was 100 Miles Away

This week, he said, the military told him that the town of Zaragoza had been about 50% abandoned. Army

chief of staff Gen. Homero Mendoza said Wednesday that Monday's ambush — which killed three American mothers and six of their children — started at 9:40 a.m., but the nearest army units were in the border city of Agua Prieta, about 100 miles and 3½ hours away.

Related Story: At Least 9 US Citizens Die in Mexico Cartel Attack

Soldiers didn't start out for the scene until 2:30 p.m. and didn't arrive until 6:15 p.m. — even while five surviving children lay hiding in the mountains with bullet wounds. "There are areas where the government's control is very fragile," said Mexican security analyst Alejandro Hope. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador created the militarized National Guard after he took office last December to help law enforcement, but its 70,000 troops have to cover a vast territory.

"The government's main policy tool, the National Guard, is not where it should be," Hope said, noting that Sonora and Chihuahua states, with over 160,000 square miles (420,000 square kilometers) between them, have only about 4,100 National Guard officers stationed there, or about one for every 40 square miles. "It should be in the mountains, and it's not there."

Residents Know They Can't Fight the Cartels on Their Own

Questions have also arisen over whether the army can do its job even when it is present. On Oct. 17, soldiers were forced to release the captured son of drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman to avoid further bloodshed after Sinaloa cartel gunmen counterattacked in greater numbers in the city of Culiacan. Colonia Le Baron is a place where the U.S. influence is evident everywhere you look: pickup trucks with license plates from California, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, and English-speaking customers eating hamburgers at Ray's Restaurant...

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November 7, 2019 | AP News

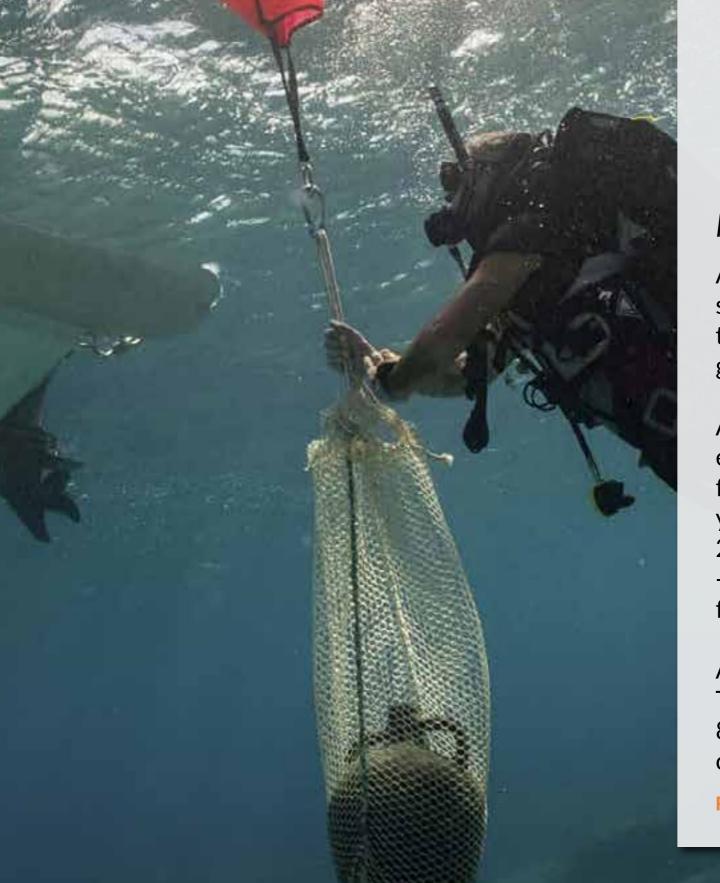
SAN FRANCISCO — Saudi Arabia, frustrated by growing criticism of its leaders and policies on social media, recruited two Twitter employees to spy on thousands of accounts that included prominent opponents, prosecutors alleged Wednesday.

The complaint unsealed in U.S. District Court in San Francisco detailed a coordinated effort by Saudi government officials to recruit employees at the social media giant to look up the private data of Twitter accounts, including email addresses linked to the accounts and internet protocol addresses that can give up a user's location. It appeared to link Crown

Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the powerful 34-year-son of King Salman, to the effort. The accounts included those of a popular critic of the government with more than 1 million followers and a news personality. Neither was named.

Related Story: Twitter Bans All Political Advertisements

The complaint also alleged that the employees — whose jobs did not require access to Twitter users' private information — were rewarded with a designer watch and tens of thousands of dollars funneled into secret bank accounts. Ahmad Abouammo, a U.S. citizen, and Ali Alzabarah, a Saudi citizen, were...



3 ANCIENT SHIPWRECKS DISCOVERED OFF AEGEAN ISLAND OF KASOS

November 5, 2019 | AP News

ATHENS, Greece — Greece's Culture Ministry says three shipwrecks from ancient and mediaeval times and large sections of their cargoes have been discovered off the small Aegean island of Kasos.

A statement Monday said an underwater survey that ended last month also located cannons and other scattered finds — possibly from other foundered vessels that have not yet been pinpointed. The oldest of the wrecks found was a 2,300-year-old trader. Its surviving cargo included amphorae — large jars used to transport wine, oil or foodstuffs — and fine tableware.

Archaeologists also located five stone anchors in the wreck. The two other ships dated to the 1st century B.C. and the 8th-10th century A.D. Kasos lies between Crete and Rhodes on what remains a key trade route linking the Aegean with...

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IRAN TO FUEL CENTRIFUGES IN NEW STEP AWAY FROM NUCLEAR DEAL

November 6, 2019 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran will start injecting uranium gas into over a thousand centrifuges at a fortified nuclear facility built inside a mountain, the country's president announced Tuesday in Tehran's latest step away from its atomic accord with world powers since President Donald Trump withdrew from the deal over a year ago. President Hassan Rouhani's announcement means that Iran's Fordo nuclear facility, publicly revealed only 10 years ago, again will become an active atomic site rather than a research facility as envisioned by the landmark 2015 accord.

The State Department announced days ago that it would renew a waiver allowing Russia's state-run Rosatom nuclear company to continue its conversion work at the site. The announcement represents a significant development as Fordo's 1,044 centrifuges previously spun without uranium gas for enrichment under the deal. It also increases pressure on...

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Frode Kvalo/Greek Culture Ministry via AP



Office of the Iranian Presidency via AP

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