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WEEKLY DIGEST
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**LOOK FOR MORE MILITARY
JETS OVERHEAD IN MARCH
AS BASE WELCOMES F-16S »**

**GOV. NEWSOM PROPOSES NEW
PLAN FOR MANAGING WATER »**

**BLOOMBERG SAYS HE'S READY
TO BOUNCE 'BULLY' TRUMP »**



LOOK FOR MORE MILITARY JETS OVERHEAD IN MARCH AS BASE WELCOMES F-16S

February 6, 2020 | Randy Reed

A squadron of Air Force F-16s will streak across local skies for two weeks in March. It's part of a unique joint exercise with Fresno's 144th Fighter Wing. And officials from the California Air National Guard base are looking for the public's help to come up with a new name for the multi-unit training event. Pilots from Holloman Air Force Base in

"The second and probably our larger mission that we more train to every day is our air superiority world-wide mission." — Capt. Skylar Bautista

New Mexico will fly alongside local F-15 Eagle pilots, taking off and landing at the Fresno base each day. Aircraft from Naval

Air Station Lemoore may also participate in the training, which begins March 17.

Related Story: Lemoore Navy Fighter Squadrons Return After Historic Deployment

More Fighter Jets Flying Over Fresno
"During the exercise, people in the surrounding area of Fresno and Clovis will see a few more jets taking off every day, said Capt. Skylar Bautista, a pilot with the local base's 194th Fighter Squadron. "It really shouldn't be much more than normal, but they will look different and they will be taking off with the F-15s that (local residents) are used to seeing every day. You may see one or two larger aircraft taking off with us as well," he said. The single-engine F-16 Fighting Falcons are somewhat quieter than the twin-engine F-15s flown by Fresno's Air Guard pilots, Bautista noted. "So, hopefully, not really any kind of impact from a noise standpoint," he said.

Name the Exercise. Win a Commemorative Patch.
In the past, the exercise was called Sentry Griffin. It's a reference to the mythical beast that serves as the local squadron's mascot. This year's version will

introduce new training elements that base officials want to emphasize with a more innovative name. "For instance, in Arizona, there's an (F-16) Viper squadron. They do 'Haboob Havoc,'" Bautista said. A "haboob" is a powerful wind storm that kicks up tremendous dust clouds across the desert.

Related Story: NAS Lemoore Pilots Will Make Historic Super Bowl Flyover

"For a short amount of time, they do this exercise that is also really attractive and they offer great training," Bautista said Fresno needs an equally memorable name with a local flavor. Ideas are being taken via the 144th Fighter Wing's Facebook page through Friday. The winner will receive a copy of the uniform patch the pilots will wear during the exercise. Two a

Day Launches from Air Base

During the two weeks of exercises, the squadrons will take off for their missions and return for landings twice each day, in the mornings and afternoons, Bautista said. The actual combat exercises will happen off the California coast and in the Mojave Desert. Both locations will allow pilots to simulate a more authentic war scenario. "We are basically (simulating) being the aggressor to a nation that might be on the Pacific Ocean. And we have to fight our way into that country," Bautista explained. "If we do well and we establish dominance in that domain, then we'll push further in. And then in further engagements in the...

"What we're going to do is, the good guys, so to speak, have a certain amount of pilots, aircraft, missiles, bullets, and you can't use more than that for the whole exercise. The bad guys, so to speak, which will have someone in charge of simulating an enemy force and a commander — has all the same limitations." — Capt. Skylar Bautista

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WHERE SHOULD FRESNO'S HOMELESS GO? ARIAS AND DYER DUKE IT OUT.

GV Wire Jahz Tello

February 5, 2020 | David Taub

Mayoral candidate Jerry Dyer and a trio of city councilmembers agree on two things about the homelessness issue in Fresno — it is a crisis and the top issue in the March 3 election. But, in a news conference on Wednesday, the councilmembers criticized Dyer's plan for navigation centers — essentially a singular location with beds and services.

Esmeralda Soria, Miguel Arias, and Nelson Esparza say such centers are too large and should not be placed in downtown Fresno, where many homeless services are concentrated. They suggested smaller homeless centers throughout the city instead. In turn, Dyer held his own news conference afterward. "What have they done? I will answer it for you. Nothing," said Dyer, who dismissed the councilmembers' criticism as a political stunt. Arias said the location in the downtown/Chinatown

area is where the city opened five new shelters in the last year. That is on top of homeless service providers such as the Poverello House and Fresno Rescue Mission. "Our constituents are done being dumped on. Enough is enough. It is time for the rest of Fresno to do their part," said Arias, who represents the area on the council. Dyer, the former police chief, challenged Arias' analysis of the situation. Dyer said that placing a navigation center near existing service locations makes perfect sense.

"It seems reasonable," Dyer said. "All we are asking is we have an ability to house individuals, to centrally locate services so they can be productive citizens again ... is that too much to ask for us as a city?" Arias cast doubts that a navigation center, like those used in San Diego, would be effective. He vowed...

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'DON'T LAUGH AT ME' SHOWS FRESNO YOUNGSTERS HOW TO DEAL WITH BULLIES

February 5, 2020 | Nancy Price

Ishan Singh and his friends have been bullied because of their Sikh religion. Dao Yang was called a nerdy over-achiever. Kaylee Gudino got picked on because of her looks — in the second grade. Most members of the Sunnyside High School bullying prevention club, Don't Laugh at Me (also known as DLAM), can recall being made fun of, or even abused, by a bully at some point in their lives.

And they draw on those memories and experiences in crafting performances that they take each year to elementary schools across Fresno Unified, to let younger kids know what they should do when a bully picks on someone. Club adviser Cyndi Mello started the first Don't Laugh at Me club in 2001 when she was a "novice" teacher at Fowler High School and, in the wake of the Columbine High School shooting massacre, wanted to do something to help students feel like they belonged. The concept for Don't Laugh at Me stemmed from a class writing assignment and the 1998 song with the same name, says...

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DOES BRAND THINK DYER IS THE MAN? CHECKBOOK SAYS SO.

February 4, 2020 | David Taub

While Fresno Mayor Lee Brand **won't come out and directly say he is endorsing Jerry Dyer** as his successor, his dollars may do the talking for him. Brand contributed \$20,000 from his campaign account to the independent expenditure effort run by the Fresno Chamber of Commerce to elect Dyer for mayor and Nathan Alonzo for City Council. The mayor certainly has cash on hand to donate. At the end of 2019, he had \$430,833 in his account. He is not running for reelection.

The chamber's account can advocate for its candidates in any way, as long as it does not coordinate with them. So far, they've printed materials left at doorsteps and spent money on digital ads. On the other side, Rising Together, No on Dyer for Mayor 2020 picked up another check from a California legislator. Assemblyman Rob Bonta's campaign contributed \$1,000. City elected officers and candidates filed their fundraising figures for 2019. Because of the primary moving to March, the 2019 figures came in after the filings were due for fundraising in...

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GV Wire/Jahz Tello



GOV. NEWSOM PROPOSES NEW PLAN FOR MANAGING WATER

February 5, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom revealed a plan on Tuesday that would keep more water in the fragile San Joaquin River Delta while restoring 60,000 acres of habitat for endangered species and generating more than \$5 billion in new funding for environmental improvements. The framework announced Tuesday by Gov. Newsom is a unique approach to managing the state's scarce water resources. Historically, California has governed water usage by issuing rules — rules that are often challenged in court by farmers or environmental groups. Those lawsuits can drag on for years and prevent programs designed to boost sagging salmon populations and other threatened species that live

“Today, my Administration is proposing a path forward, one that will move past the old water binaries and set us up for a secure and prosperous water future.” — Gov. Gavin Newsom

in the delta. Instead of issuing new rules, for the past year the Newsom administration has been negotiating with water agencies to come up with “voluntary agreements” between the two sides with “partnership and oversight from environmental groups.” “Today, my Administration is proposing a path forward, one that will move past the old water binaries and set us up for a secure and prosperous water future,” Newsom wrote in an op-ed announcing the framework. But some environmental groups were skeptical. Last year, the Trump administration announced new rules that would take more water out of the delta. The Newsom administration said it would sue the federal government over those rules, but so far it has not done so.

Related Story: Gov. Gavin Newsom Restarts Giant Water Tunnel Project

The Agreements Would Be in Place for Next 15 Years
Also, John McManus, president of the Golden State Salmon Association said, the framework did not ad-

dress temperature controls for the river at the time of year when salmon need cold water to survive. “There are definitely worrisome signals coming from today’s announcement,” McManus said. Wade Crowfoot, secretary for the California Natural Resources Agency, said the state is still negotiating with the federal government and can still file a lawsuit if their concerns are not addressed. He stressed the goal is to continue working with federal agencies to resolve the issue. The agreements would be in place for the next 15 years. But they are not finished yet. Both sides still have to finish policy and legal issues. Plus, the State Water board must conduct a third-party scientific review.

“This is a promising step that will result in additional water for the environment,” said Jeffrey Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. “A shared, voluntary approach to balancing the beneficial uses of water from the Sierra is far better for California’s people and environment than years of litigation.” Water in the delta comes from snowmelt in the Sierra Nevada mountains and provides drinking water for millions of people as well as irrigation for farmers throughout the state.

More Water Means a Better Environment for the State’s Endangered Salmon Population

The framework would increase the amount of water flowing through the delta by up to 900,000 acre feet in years when conditions are dry, below normal or above normal. One acre foot of water is more than 325,000 gallons, the amount of irrigation water that would cover one acre to a depth of one foot. Additional flows would be less during wet years. More water...

“I am committing to achieving a doubling of California’s salmon population by 2050. These agreements will be foundational to meeting that goal.” — Gov. Gavin Newsom

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CALIFORNIA FIREFIGHTERS RETURN FROM BATTLING AUSTRALIA FIRES

AP/Marcio Jose Sanchez

February 5, 2020 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — Twenty firefighters from California returned to the United States on Wednesday after spending nearly a month battling wildfires in Australia.

Related Story: Meet the California Firefighters Helping Australia Battle Epic Bush Fires

The firefighters based at Angeles National Forest arrived at Los Angeles International Airport and were scheduled to reunite with their families at a city fire station.

The group had worked with the Victoria Rural Fire Service

to fight Australia's devastating blazes. Marvin Schober, 46, planned to surprise his brother, Capt. Leonard Dimaculangan, at the fire station.

"Those guys are superheroes," Schober said as he waited with a GoPro camera to capture his brother's reaction. The returning firefighters — 18 men and two women — worked on different crews in Australia.

Angeles National Forest sprawls over more than 1,090 square miles of the San Gabriel Mountains, which form a wilderness backdrop to metropolitan Los Angeles...

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CAN DOG 'SLEUTHS' SNIFF OUT CALIFORNIA CITRUS DISEASE?

February 5, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Dog detectives might be able to help save ailing citrus groves, research published Monday suggests. Scientists trained dogs to sniff out a crop disease called citrus greening that has hit orange, lemon and grapefruit orchards in Florida, California and Texas. The dogs can detect it weeks to years before it shows up on tree leaves and roots, the researchers report.

"This technology is thousands of years old — the dog's nose," said Timothy Gottwald, a researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a co-author of the study. "We've just trained dogs to hunt new prey: the bacteria that causes a very damaging crop disease." Dog sleuths are also faster, cheaper and more accurate than people collecting hundreds of leaves for lab analysis, according to the study in the Proceedings of National Academies of Sciences. Citrus greening — also called huanglongbing — is caused by a bacteria that is spread by a tiny insect that feeds on the leaves and stems...

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Tim R. Gottwald/USDA via AP

PG&E CLEARS ANOTHER BANKRUPTCY HURDLE WITH DEBT REFINANCING

February 4, 2020 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal judge on Tuesday approved a settlement that moves Pacific Gas & Electric closer to getting out of bankruptcy, but the troubled utility still must navigate nettlesome obstacles being put up by the state of California.

Related Story: Bill Seeks State Takeover of PG&E

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Dennis Montali signed off on a deal to refinance billions of dollars in debt to pay off PG&E bondholders. The bondholders had threatened to cause problems for the nation's largest utility. As part of the truce, the bondholders agreed to abandon an alternative plan for getting PG&E out of bankruptcy and support the company's blueprint instead. In the past few months, PG&E has also negotiated settlements totaling \$25.5 billion to appease homeowners, businesses, insurers and government agencies who had claimed more than \$50 billion in losses from a series of catastrophic wildfires blamed on the utility's dilapidated electrical grid...

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IN FRESNO, BLOOMBERG SAYS HE'S READY TO BOUNCE 'BULLY' TRUMP

February 3, 2020 | David Taub

President Donald Trump's insults about his height didn't deter Mike Bloomberg. The billionaire businessman and Democratic presidential candidate made his own cracks about his stature during a speech Monday at Fresno City College. "I'm still growing. I still have hopes. Unfortunately, when I'm growing, I'm growing this way (motioning with his hands side to side) instead of this way (hands motioning up and down)," Bloomberg said. Trump commented on Bloomberg's height in a pre-Super Bowl interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity on Sunday.

Several times during his 20-minute speech, Bloomberg called Trump a bully. He told the receptive audience that he was the candidate who could defeat him. "When you can't defend your record on healthcare or wages or the environment, you resort to insults. Donald Trump's insults don't bother me ... I'm a New Yorker and I've never backed down from a bully or ran away from a fight," Bloomberg said.

Speech About Broad Goals

Bloomberg touched on broad goals of his campaign in the courtyard at the Old Administration Building. He highlighted raising teacher pay while he served as mayor of New York City and his effort to curb gun violence. He additionally his efforts on climate change, air quality, and inequality. "Central Valley issues are Latino issues. And, Latino issues are American issues," Bloomberg said. "We cannot afford another four years of this craziness." He did not offer many specifics for his plans. Fresno was the second of three stops for Bloomberg, who campaigned throughout California on Monday using a chartered jet. In the morning, he appeared in Sacramento. After his Fresno stop, he headed to Compton.

"Central Valley issues are Latino issues. And, Latino issues are American issues." — Presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg

Establishment Watches, if Not Supports Bloomberg
Fresno City Councilman Luis Chavez was on hand to watch the speech, along with city council colleague Mike Karbassi, who said he was impressed but not ready to endorse. Councilmembers Miguel Arias and Esmeralda Soria also dropped in for part of the event. The Democratic establishment locally and statewide also turned out in Fresno. Former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and current San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo introduced Bloomberg. Stockton Mayor Michael Tubbs was there, too. Even Kingsburg councilwoman Jewel Hurtado — an avowed Bernie Sanders supporter — caught part of the speech between her classes at Fresno City. Isaac Gudino, a Fresno City College student and one-time political podcast host, said Bloomberg could be the man if frontrunner Joe Biden falls. "This is probably the centrist wing of the party's chance at a very reliable back-up plan," Gudino said.

Bloomberg opened a campaign office in Fresno, hiring 15 local staffers at salaries of \$6,000 a month, led by Chavez. It is one of 20 offices statewide Bloomberg's campaign team opened.

Students More Interested in Food Truck

School officials estimated about 200 people attended Bloomberg's speech, far smaller than Bernie Sanders drawing 2,700 in November at the college. The make-up of the crowd also differed. Sanders drew a younger audience with few elected or party officials. Bloomberg drew many party insiders, and a more button-upped crowd, weather (hovering in the 40s) notwithstanding. Bloomberg tried to entice students to attend with a free taco truck from El Jaliscience. Volunteers stood at the courtyard entrance, acting like carnival barkers hoping to attract a crowd. While it worked for some, several students appeared more interested in a free meal than a civics lesson. "He's not withholding his finances. He's providing lunch today for all those who came..."

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AT PRAYER BREAKFAST, TRUMP DECRIES 'DISHONEST AND CORRUPT' PEOPLE

AP/ Evan Vucci

February 6, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unleashed his fury against those who tried to remove him from office at a prayer breakfast Thursday, a day after his acquittal by the Senate in his impeachment trial.

Speaking from a stage where he was joined by congressional leaders, including Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who led the impeachment charge against him, Trump shattered the usual veneer of bipartisanship at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. "As everybody knows, my family, our great country and your president have been put

through a terrible ordeal by some very dishonest and corrupt people," Trump said at the annual event. His airing of grievances came hours before he was to deliver a full response to the impeachment vote at the White House surrounded by supporters.

"They have done everything possible to destroy us and by so doing very badly hurt our nation," said Trump, who triumphantly held up copies of two newspapers with banner "ACQUITTED" headlines as he took the stage. His remarks were especially jarring and whiplash-inducing coming after a...

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AP/Alex Brandon

PELOSI SHREDS TRUMP'S SPEECH. RIGHT THERE ON THE PODIUM.

February 5, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — And then she tore up the speech. No sooner had President Donald Trump finished his State of the Union address than House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ripped the paper it was printed on in two. Right there, on camera, behind Trump's back. As he stepped down, she ripped again. Then a third time. And a fourth. If Trump knew about the American carnage going on behind him, he didn't react as he left. But Pelosi was on her turf, with a deep understanding of her audience — and she wasn't finished.

In case any confusion remained, Pelosi held up what remained of the address to her family in the gallery, in full view of reporters. "It was a manifesto of mistruths," Pelosi told reporters as she left the Capitol. The ripping was not planned, according to a person close to the Democratic speaker who was unauthorized to speak publicly. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., said Wednesday that Pelosi told House Democrats...

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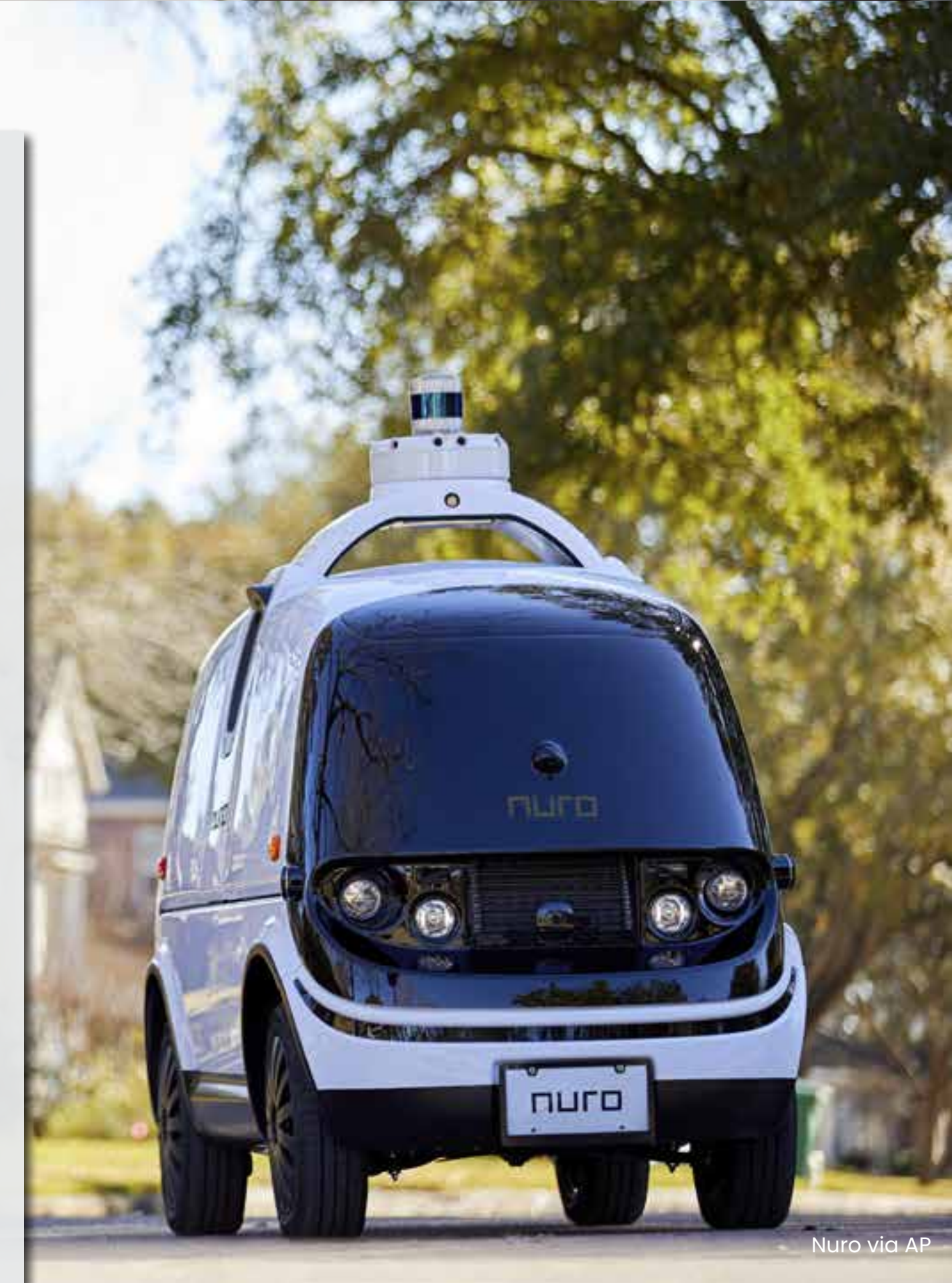
SELF-DRIVING DELIVERY VEHICLES CAN BYPASS HUMAN-DRIVER SAFETY

February 6, 2020 | AP News

DETROIT — For the first time, the U.S. government's highway safety agency has approved a company's request to deploy a self-driving vehicle that doesn't meet federal safety standards that apply to cars and trucks driven by humans. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration granted temporary approval for Silicon Valley robotics company Nuro to run low-speed autonomous delivery vehicles that were designed so they can't carry humans.

Nuro's vehicles won't be required to have side and rear-view mirrors and other safety provisions. Also not on the safety feature list; windshield wipers, steering wheels or brake pedals. The vehicles previously were subject to federal standards for low-speed vehicles that travel under 25 miles per hour. Those didn't need steering wheels or brake pedals and didn't have to have human backup drivers. Nuro's battery-powered vehicles can be monitored and controlled remotely by a...

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Nuro via AP



AP File

WORLD

IN BLESSING ANNEXATION, TRUMP ERODES AN INTERNATIONAL NORM

February 4, 2020 | AP News

Annexation, at its heart, is a byproduct of conflict. Almost never is it an act of peace, though it has been cast that way at times throughout human history. Certainly not under international law, which describes it as the forcible acquisition of territory by one state at the expense of another. It often formalizes military occupa-

The Palestinians view the settlements in the West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem — territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war — as a major obstacle to peace. That position is held by much of the international community, which views the settlements as illegal.

tion. The United Nations made it illegal after World War II. Israel is poised to annex a vast swath of the occupied West Bank with the blessing of President Donald Trump's Mideast plan, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his hawkish supporters have hailed as a historic

achievement. The initiative has infuriated the Palestinians, who see their aspirations for a viable independent state in danger of being bitterly extinguished.

Related Story: Trump Peace Plan Delights Israelis, Enrages Palestinians

The plan would allow Israel to keep all its Jewish settlements in the West Bank, where over 460,000 Israelis reside, as well as the strategic Jordan Valley. As for the rest of the West Bank, "the Israeli military will continue to control the entire territory," Netanyahu proudly announced at the White House when the plan was unveiled last month. The Palestinians view the settlements in the West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem — territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war — as a major obstacle to peace. That position is held by much of the international community, which views the settlements as illegal. The Trump plan seems to brush aside international law, effectively saying Israel is a special case. It adopts the Israeli position that the territories were seized in a "defensive war" in 1967 and that Israel

has "valid legal and historical claims" to them, which is widely disputed. Israeli law allows the government to extend sovereignty over any part of the British-ruled Palestine Mandate, which included what is now Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and where the British had promised to establish a home for the Jewish people, without specifying its boundaries.

'Annexation Has a Negative Aura'

In the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, Egyptian forces took control of the Gaza Strip and Jordan took over the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Israel captured the territories when it launched a surprise attack in 1967 at a time of soaring tensions with its Arab neighbors. Today most of the international community views the West Bank and east Jerusalem as occupied Palestinian territory. Israel's claim that it has the right to territory in the West Bank because of the Palestine Mandate is "simply a way to try to avoid a confrontation with the international community," said Amichai Cohen, a legal expert at the Israel Democracy Institute, a non-partisan think tank. "Annexation has a negative aura to it because it's illegal," he said. It wouldn't be the first time Israel has annexed territory over international objections. It annexed east Jerusalem shortly after seizing it, claiming the entire city as its unified capital. In 1981 it annexed the Golan Heights, which it had captured from Syria in the 1967 war. The Syrian leadership has vowed for more than 50 years that it will recapture the Golan, but is not in any position to do so militarily. The Trump administration has endorsed both annexations, breaking with decades of U.S. policy. The Trump plan gives Israel permission to immediately annex territory, but Israel's race to act on it faces legal and political obstacles, including an apparent push for...

"Annexation has a negative aura to it because it's illegal." — Amichai Cohen, a legal expert at the Israel Democracy Institute, a non-partisan think tank

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ASTRONAUT CHRISTINA KOCH RETURNS FROM RECORD SETTING SPACEFLIGHT

Sergei Ilitsky/Pool Photo via AP

February 6, 2020 | AP News

MOSCOW — NASA astronaut Christina Koch, who spent nearly 11 months in orbit to set a record for the longest spaceflight by a woman, landed safely Thursday in Kazakhstan along with two International Space Station crewmates.

The Soyuz capsule carrying Koch, station Commander Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency and Russian cosmonaut Alexander Skvortsov, touched down southeast of Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, at 3:12 p.m. (0912 GMT). Koch wrapped up a 328-day mission after her first flight into space, providing researchers the opportunity to observe the effects of long-duration spaceflight on a woman. The study is

important since NASA plans to return to the moon under the Artemis program and prepare for the human exploration of Mars. Koch smiled and gave a thumbs-up as a support team helped her out of the capsule and placed her in a chair for a quick post-flight check-up alongside her crew mates.

Russian space officials said they were in good shape. Koch, who grew up in Jacksonville, North Carolina, and now lives near the Gulf of Mexico in Galveston, Texas, with her husband, Bob, told The Associated Press last month that taking part in the first all-female spacewalk was the highlight of her mission. Koch said she and fellow NASA astronaut Jessica...

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AP/Maxim Slutsky

UNKNOWNNS OF THE NEW VIRUS MAKE GLOBAL QUARANTINES A STRUGGLE

February 5, 2020 | AP News

SEOUL, South Korea — Health authorities are scrambling to halt the spread of a new virus that has killed hundreds in China, restricting visitors from the country and confining thousands on cruise ships for extensive screening after some passengers tested positive. But with important details about the illness and how it spreads still unknown, officials and medical personnel are struggling.

Governments have rushed to get their citizens out of China, which is orchestrating history's largest anti-viral campaign by blocking 50 million people from leaving Wuhan, the center of the outbreak, and nearby areas. A growing number of Chinese cities are discouraging people from even leaving their apartments. Villages have blocked entry points with piles of dirt and rubble, while businesses and offices remain closed indefinitely. As Beijing's authoritarian leadership faces questions over having kept its citizens in the dark for weeks before infections started to explode, other countries are...

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AP EXCLUSIVE: BORDER APPREHENSIONS DROP 8 STRAIGHT MONTHS

February 4, 2020 | AP News


WASHINGTON — The number of border apprehensions has dropped for the eighth straight month, following crackdowns by the Trump administration that include forcing asylum seekers back over the U.S.-Mexico border to wait out their claims, a Homeland Security official said Monday. The official said the number of encounters with border officials over the past four months was 165,000. A year earlier during the same time it was about 242,000. The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the official results have not been released.




The tally for the month of January was about 36,000, including apprehensions of people crossing illegally and migrants who were declared inadmissible by border officers at a port of entry . It was a 10 percent decline from December. The steep decline will almost certainly figure heavily into President Donald Trump's State of the Union address Tuesday...

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