



WEEKLY DIGEST  
AUGUST 14, 2020



**VALLEY DEMS EXCITED BY HARRIS PICK. LOCAL GOP LEADER SAYS IT HELPS TRUMP. »**

**NEWSOM: NEW DATA SHOW CA IS 'TURNING THE CORNER' »**

**NEW US JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL BELOW 1 MILLION BUT REMAIN HIGH »**





Shutterstock

# LOCAL VALLEY DEMS EXCITED BY HARRIS PICK. LOCAL GOP LEADER SAYS IT HELPS TRUMP.

August 12, 2020 | David Taub

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's pick of Kamala Harris as his running mate is eliciting the expected fervor

**"We are happy, proud, and elated at this historical moment in our history."  
— Kimberly Tapscott-Munson**

among local Democrats, as well as doubts from Republicans. Harris has made several stops in the Valley over the years, as both the state's attorney general and as a U.S. senator. Many local Democrats posted pictures with themselves and Harris on social media after Tuesday's announcement.

## A Historic Choice

Fresno County Board of Education Trustee and Democratic Party activist Kimberly Tapscott-Munson could barely contain her enthusiasm about the Harris pick. "We are excited, elated, and proud that she is the first woman of color to receive this nomination as vice president. We are happy, proud, and elated at this historical moment in our history," said Tapscott-Munson, who is involved with Black Women Organized for Political Action.

## Costa Offers Full Support

"I have known Senator Kamala Harris for many years. Her strength of character and incredible intellect make her more than qualified to serve in our country's highest office," Rep. Jim Costa, a Fresno Democrat, said in a news release from his campaign. "She has the experience and ability to be a most formidable candidate as vice president. As Joe Biden's running mate, Sen. Harris will bring even more

energy to the campaign, as we all work together to ensure their election this fall." Costa endorsed Biden during the presidential campaign earlier this year. In 2016, when Harris ran for the Senate, Costa supported her Democratic opponent, Loretta Sanchez. Harris ended up the easy winner in that race with 61.6% of the vote.

## Republicans Not Impressed

Local Republicans were not impressed by Biden's selection of Harris. "According to Biden's own assessment during the primary debates, Kamala Harris is uniquely unqualified to fill that role, let alone to lead the country. I couldn't agree more," House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) said in an emailed statement. "As her policy stances in Washington show, she would take away private health plans, make energy more expensive, and 'reimagine policing.' She will not rebuild the economy, confront China, or uphold public safety." Fred Vanderhoof, the chairman of the Fresno County Republican Party, says Harris as Biden's vice presidential nominee helps President Donald Trump's re-election bid. "It shows that the Democrats are concerned about shoring up their base with the African-American community," Vanderhoof said. "President Trump has done so well with the African-American community, with highest employment ever (and) lowest unemployment ever (before the pandemic.) I think the Democrats are...

**"She would take away private health plans, make energy more expensive, and 'reimagine policing.' She will not rebuild the economy, confront China, or uphold public safety."  
— House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy**

[READ MORE »](#)





# VEHICLE ACCESS PLAN FOR SAN JOAQUIN RIVER GETS CONSERVANCY OK

GV Wire File

August 12, 2020 | David Taub

After decades in the making and years discussing the current plan, the government agency in charge of improving public access to the San Joaquin River has agreed on a path forward. The San Joaquin River Conservancy board approved a plan to build roads and access points at both Spano Park in north Fresno, and at Riverview Drive in a residential neighborhood one mile away.

The project, known as the River West Fresno, Eaton Trail Extension Project was approved in a 13-1 vote. “It’s a great day for public access,” board chairman and Fresno City Councilman Mike Karbassi said. If built,

the project will provide vehicular access from the two locations to the river bottom, and will include parking spaces and trails. Currently in those areas, the only access is by foot.

## Years of Negotiation

Getting to this point took years of negotiation, wading through government bureaucracy and appealing to groups with sometimes disparate interests. The next step is to make the plan a reality. With the vote, the board approved plans for a paved road winding through what is now Spano Park, a small greenspace at the end of Palm Ave. north of Nees Ave...

[READ MORE »](#)



## HOSPITAL-TRAINED CHAPLAINS PROVIDE SOLACE IN FARM FIELDS

August 10, 2020 | Sponsored by Community Medical Centers

After spending two winter seasons working California and Arizona fruit harvests, Rigoberto Escobedo Muñoz expects the loneliness of being away from his wife and four children in Tamaulipas, Mexico. But this winter it’s more heart-wrenching. When he headed north this time, his 9-year-old...

[READ MORE »](#)

## BIG CREEK HAS ESSENTIAL WORKERS, A CLOSED SCHOOL, AND NO CHILD CARE CENTER

August 12, 2020 | Nancy Price

Big Creek, population 188, is in essence a Southern California-Edison company town — one where parents live with their children year-round. The parents run the region’s massive hydroelectric project that generates one-sixth of all the hydropower produced in California, or about 4 million megawatt-hours per year.

These are the folks that make sure the power stays on so your air-conditioning can keep running. Clearly, they are some of the most essential of California’s essential workers. The state of California has taken pains to keep essential workers on the job by making sure that child care facilities remain open, even as schools shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic. But for Big Creek’s elementary age children, all 56 of them...

[READ MORE »](#)







AP File

# STATE

## NEWSOM: NEW DATA SHOW CALIFORNIA IS 'TURNING THE CORNER'

August 13, 2020 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — California is showing improvement in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday, citing a significantly lower number of confirmed new cases as the state begins to clear backlogged cases from a data failure.

The Democratic governor said he also was encouraged by a downward trend in the state's hospitalization rates which he noted are down 21%, and ICU admissions, down 15% over the past 14 days.

The Democratic governor said he also was encouraged by a downward trend in the state's hospitalization rates which he noted are down 21%, and ICU admissions, down 15% over the past 14 days. The number of newly confirmed cases Wednesday, 5,433, was "another indication that we're turning the corner on this pandemic," he said. The latest figures represent a significant drop from the record 12,807 new daily cases reported statewide during the spike in infections last month.

More than 10,600 people statewide have died, including 180 reported Wednesday, with the great majority in Los Angeles County. Dr. Roger Lewis, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, said there's been "a clear decline" in hospitalizations, meaning the rates of transmission began to slow two to three weeks ago. Daily said cases are back to where they were in May. "The consistent downward trend in new cases requiring hospitalization and the slight decrease in transmission rate is good

news," he said. "This is what progress looks like when we work together."

### The Number of Infections Is Thought to Be Higher Because Many People Have Not Been Tested

State officials are still working to process the nearly 300,000 coronavirus test results lost because of a data error. The state relies on timely statistics to determine whether schools and businesses can reopen. Newsom said it will take a few more days before officials can assess the overall infection rate. The number of infections is thought to be higher because many people have not been tested, and studies suggest people can be infected with the virus without feeling sick. For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some — especially older adults and people with existing health problems — it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death. While the virus' spread appeared to be slowing, the economic effects are still raging. The state has processed more than 9.7 million claims for unemployment insurance since the pandemic began. The state halted eviction and foreclosure proceedings...

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said it has sent a medical team to respond to the outbreak at the prison north of Sacramento. Since mid-July, it has set up tents to quarantine patients and a facility to screen potentially infected people.

[READ MORE »](#)





# CALIFORNIA COURTS OPT TO RESUME EVICTIONS IN SEPTEMBER

August 13, 2020 | AP News

California will resume eviction and foreclosure proceedings on Sept. 2, stoking fears of a wave of evictions during the coronavirus pandemic unless the governor and state Legislature can agree on a proposal to extend protections into 2021.

The Judicial Council of California voted 19-1 on Thursday to end the temporary rules that had been in place since April 6. Since the pandemic began in March, more than 9.7 million people have filed for

unemployment benefits in California. A survey from the U.S. Census shows more than 1.7 million renters in the state could not pay their rent on time last month.

**Lawmakers Lobbied to Keep Rules Through August**  
California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye has been reluctant to let the rules stay in place much longer, saying it's the job of the judicial branch to interpret the laws, not make them. She had...

[READ MORE »](#)



MyShake

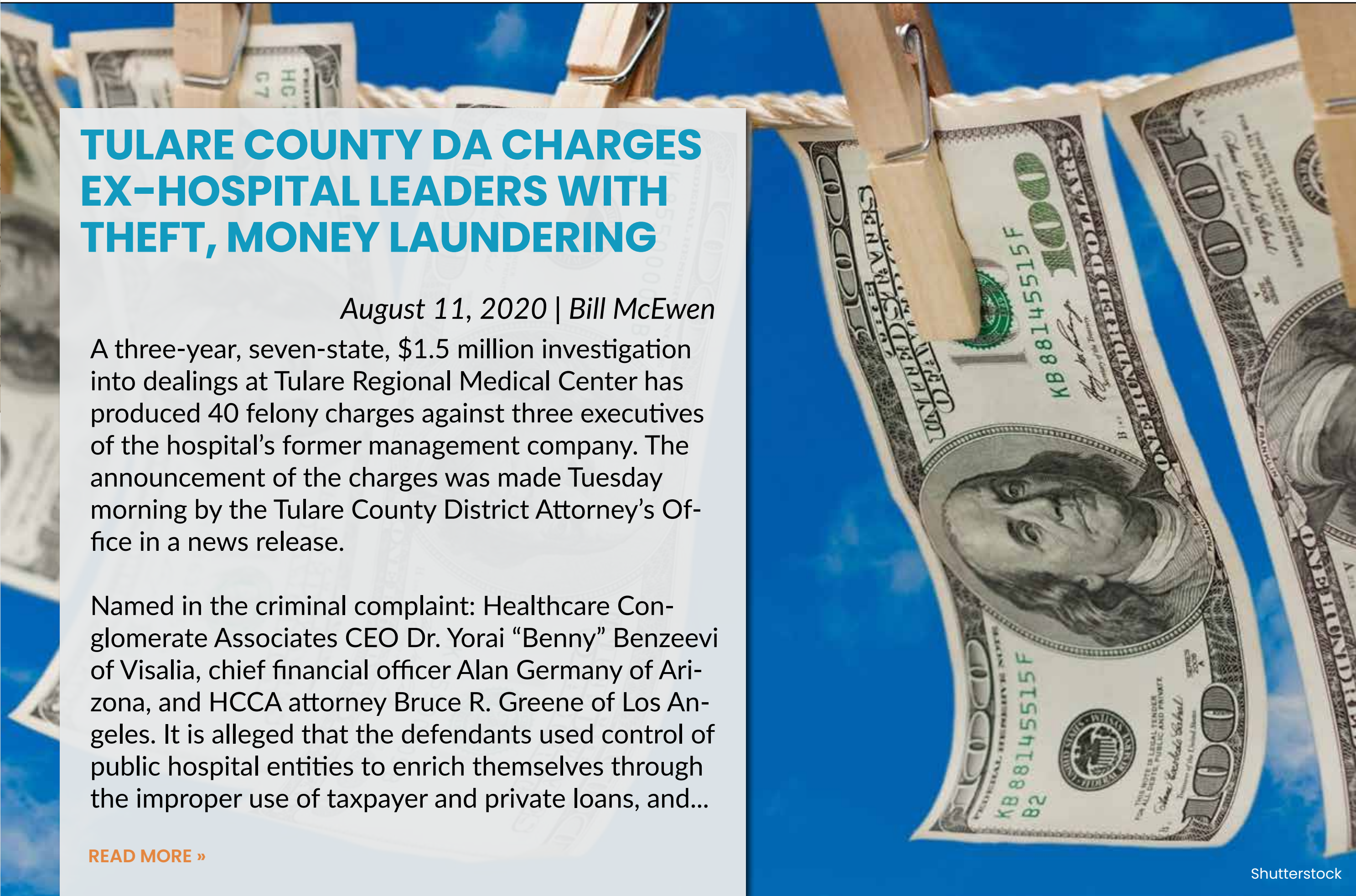
## CALIFORNIA QUAKE ALERTS TO BE STANDARD ON ANDROID PHONES

August 11, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California's earthquake early warnings will be a standard feature on all Android phones, bypassing the need for users to download the state's MyShake app in order to receive alerts, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services said. The state worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and Google, the maker of Android, to build the quake alerts into all phones that run the common-place operating system. The deal was expected to be announced Tuesday.

"This announcement means that California's world-class earthquake early warning system will be a standard function on every Android phone — giving millions precious seconds to drop, cover and hold...

[READ MORE »](#)



## TULARE COUNTY DA CHARGES EX-HOSPITAL LEADERS WITH THEFT, MONEY LAUNDERING

August 11, 2020 | Bill McEwen

A three-year, seven-state, \$1.5 million investigation into dealings at Tulare Regional Medical Center has produced 40 felony charges against three executives of the hospital's former management company. The announcement of the charges was made Tuesday morning by the Tulare County District Attorney's Office in a news release.

Named in the criminal complaint: Healthcare Conglomerate Associates CEO Dr. Yorai "Benny" Benzeevi of Visalia, chief financial officer Alan Germany of Arizona, and HCCA attorney Bruce R. Greene of Los Angeles. It is alleged that the defendants used control of public hospital entities to enrich themselves through the improper use of taxpayer and private loans, and...

[READ MORE »](#)





# NEW US JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL BELOW 1 MILLION BUT REMAIN HIGH

August 13, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The number of laid-off workers applying for unemployment aid fell below 1 million last week for the first time since the viral pandemic intensified five months ago, yet still remains at a high level. The latest figures show that the pandemic keeps forcing layoffs just as the expiration of a \$600-a-week federal jobless benefit has deepened the hardships for many — and posed a renewed threat to the U.S. economy. The level of weekly applications declined to 963,000, the second straight drop, from 1.2 million the previous week, the government said Thursday. The decline signaled that layoffs are slowing, though the latest figure still far exceeds the pre-pandemic weekly record of just under 700,000. The pandemic, the shutdowns that are

meant to fight it and the reluctance or inability of many people to shop, travel or eat out are continuing to weaken the economy and force companies to cut staff.

Twenty-three states have paused or re-

versed their business re-openings. In a hopeful sign, the rate of new confirmed viral cases has declined in the past couple of weeks, though it remains far above the rates that prevailed during May and June. Fewer people are continuing to receive state jobless aid, a sign that some employers are hiring despite the still-heavy pace

of layoffs. That figure declined last week to 15.5 million, from 16.1 million the previous week. “Another larger-than-expected decline in jobless claims suggests that the jobs recovery is regaining some momentum, but...much labor market progress remains to be done,” said Lydia Boussour, senior economist at Oxford Economics. Hiring is believed to have slowed since the spring, when states first reopened and millions of workers at bars, restaurants and retail stores were rehired. The job gain in August will probably fall short of the 1.8 million added in July, analysts say, which was below May’s and June’s gains.

Nick Bunker, a research director at the job search website Indeed, said job postings on the site grew in early August at their slowest pace in 14 weeks. And Kronos, which makes work scheduling software, says the number of shifts worked rose just 0.5% last week, compared with average weekly growth of 2.7% in May and 1.9% in June.

## Some Economists Say They Think the Expiration of the \$600 Benefit Has Contributed to the Drop in Unemployment Claims

For months, on top of their state benefit, unemployed Americans had also received the \$600 a week in federal jobless aid. But that payment...

The disaster relief fund contains just \$44 billion, which is only enough to provide benefits for five to six weeks, analysts say. So far, only Ohio, South Carolina, and West Virginia have said they will implement the program.

The level of weekly applications declined to 963,000, the second straight drop, from 1.2 million the previous week, the government said Thursday. The decline signaled that layoffs are slowing, though the latest figure still far exceeds the pre-pandemic weekly record of just under 700,000.

[READ MORE »](#)





## BIDEN, HARRIS TO MAKE UNUSUAL CAMPAIGN DEBUT IN VIRUS ERA

August 12, 2020 | AP News

WILMINGTON, Del. — Joe Biden is making his first appearance with newly chosen running mate Kamala Harris on Wednesday, betting that the California senator's historic profile and confrontational style against President Donald Trump will boost Democrats' efforts to oust the Republican president amid cascading national crises.

The former primary rivals will appear at a high school near Biden's Delaware home to discuss their shared

vision for how to defeat Trump and then lead the country through a pandemic, its economic fallout and a long-simmering reckoning with systemic racism.

Harris and Biden then will sit down together for an online fundraiser designed to let even small donors get a fresh glimpse of what the Democratic presidential ticket will look like together. A reflection of coronavirus guidelines, there will be no...

[READ MORE »](#)



AP Illustration/Peter Hamlin

## IS IT SAFE TO RIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT DURING THE PANDEMIC?

August 11, 2020 | AP News

Is it safe to ride public transit during the coronavirus pandemic? It depends on a variety of factors, but there are ways to minimize risk. The main way that the virus spreads is through droplets people spray when they talk, cough or sneeze. That means the best way to reduce the spread of infection on public transit and elsewhere is to wear a mask and stay 6 feet from others, experts say.

Transit systems around the world are requiring riders to wear masks and encouraging people to socially distance. Compliance could vary, especially as ridership levels start rebounding and trains and buses get more crowded. But there are other steps you can take to make trips less risky. The U.S. Centers for...

[READ MORE »](#)

## NO PROSECUTION FOR MANY ARRESTED AT PORTLAND'S PROTESTS

August 12, 2020 | AP News

PORTLAND, Ore. — People arrested in Portland since late May on non-violent misdemeanor charges during the protests that have racked Oregon's largest city for more than two months won't be prosecuted. The new policy announced Tuesday recognizes the outrage and frustration over a history of racial injustice that has led to the city's often violent protests and the practical realities of the court system, Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt said.

It is running more than two months behind in processing cases because of COVID-19. As a result, at least several hundred people arrested over the past few months will not face criminal prosecution...

[READ MORE »](#)







AP/Andrew Hamik

# WORLD

## TRUMP: ISRAEL TO ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH UAE, HALT ANNEXATION

August 13, 2020 | AP News

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — President Donald Trump said on Thursday that the United Arab Emirates and Israel have agreed to establish full diplomatic ties as part of a deal to halt the annexation of occupied land sought by the Palestinians for their future state. The announcement makes the UAE the first Gulf Arab state to do so and only the third Arab nation to have active diplomatic ties to Israel.

The recognition grants a rare diplomatic win to Trump ahead of the November election as his efforts to see an end to the war in Afghanistan have yet to come to fruition while efforts to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians have made no headway. Israel and the UAE also have been among Trump's closest foreign allies.

more Arab and Muslim countries will follow the United Arab Emirates," he said. The recognition grants a rare diplomatic win to Trump ahead of the November election as his efforts to see an end to the war in Afghanistan have yet to come to fruition while efforts to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians have made no headway. Israel and the UAE also have been among Trump's closest foreign allies. For Israel, the announcement comes after years of boasting by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that his government enjoys closer ties to Arab nations than publicly acknowledged. Netanyahu has sought to build settlements on lands sought

by the Palestinians and embraced a Trump proposal that would allow him to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank while granting Palestinians limited autonomy in other areas. For the UAE, home to skyscraper-studded Dubai and the rolling, oil-rich sand dunes of Abu Dhabi, it further burnishes its international campaign to be seen as a beacon of tolerance in the Middle East despite being governed by autocratic rulers. It also puts the UAE out first in a regional recognition race among neighboring Gulf Arab states. And for the Palestinians, who long have relied on Arab backing in their struggle for independence, the announcement marked both a win and setback. While Thursday's deal halts Israeli annexation plans, the Palestinians have repeatedly urged Arab governments not to normalize relations with Israel until a peace agreement establishing an independent Palestinian state is reached.

In recent years, ties between Gulf Arab nations and Israel have quietly grown, in part over their shared enmity of Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Prince Mohammed also shares Israel's distrust of Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and the militant group Hamas that holds the Gaza Strip.

### The Two Countries Also Will Partner on Fighting the Coronavirus Pandemic

"Israel got rewarded for not declaring openly what it's been doing to Palestine illegally & persistently since the beginning of the occupation," senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi wrote on Twitter. She also said the UAE has come...

[READ MORE »](#)





# OUTCRY IN SOMALIA AS NEW BILL WOULD ALLOW CHILD MARRIAGE

*August 12, 2020 | AP News*

JOHANNESBURG — An outcry is rising in Somalia as parliament considers a bill that would allow child marriage once a girl’s sexual organs mature and would allow forced marriage as long as the family gives their consent.

The bill is a dramatic reworking of years of efforts by civil society to bring forward a proposed law to give more protections to women and girls in one of the world’s most conservative countries. The new Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill “would repre-

sent a major setback in the fight against sexual violence in Somalia and across the globe” and should be withdrawn immediately, the United Nations special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Pramila Patten, said in a statement Tuesday. The bill also weakens protections for victims of sexual violence, she said.

Already more than 45% of young women in Somalia were married or “in union” before age 18, according to a United Nations analysis in 2014-15. Somalia...

[READ MORE »](#)



# VIRUS SURGE MAKES US WEAK LINK IN GLOBAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY

*August 11, 2020 | AP News*

FRANKFURT, Germany — People in China are back to buying German luxury cars. Europe’s assembly lines are accelerating. Now the global economy is waiting for the United States to get its coronavirus outbreak under control and boost the recovery, but there’s little sign of that. The United States’ fumbling response to the pandemic and its dithering over a new aid package is casting doubt on its economic prospects and making it one of the chief risks to a global rebound.

After springtime restrictions, many U.S. states prematurely declared victory over the virus and began to reopen their economies, leading to a resurgence in COVID-19 cases. Confirmed infections are...

[READ MORE »](#)

# US SAYS IRAN BRIEFLY SEIZES OIL TANKER NEAR STRAIT OF HORMUZ

*August 13, 2020 | AP News*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The Iranian navy boarded and briefly seized a Liberian-flagged oil tanker near the strategic Strait of Hormuz amid heightened tensions between Tehran and the U.S., a U.S. military official said Thursday.

The U.S. military’s Central Command published a black-and-white video showing what appeared to be special forces fast-roping down from a helicopter onto the MT Wila, whose last position appeared to be off the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates near the city of Khorfakkan. The Iranian navy held the vessel for some five hours before releasing it Wednesday, said a U.S. military official who spoke...

[READ MORE »](#)



 [GVWIRE.COM](https://gvwire.com)  [GV WIRE](https://www.facebook.com/GVWire)  [@GVWIRE](https://twitter.com/GVWIRE)  [@GVWIRE](https://www.instagram.com/GVWIRE)

**SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER**