



PAUL KURODA For The Times

LESSONS OUTSIDE THE FOREST

Furloughed park rangers are going to schools and teaching young students about nature. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Shots are urged as RSV hits the U.S.

The highly contagious respiratory virus is sending toddlers and babies to the hospital.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

A wave of the highly contagious respiratory syncytial virus is sweeping across the United States — sending greater numbers of babies and toddlers to the hospital, recent data show.

The onset of RSV comes as the country heads into the wider fall-and-winter respiratory virus season, also typically marked by increased circulation of ailments such as COVID-19 and the flu.

But RSV, the leading cause of infant hospitalization nationwide, presents particular risk for the youngest babies, a major reason health experts recommend pregnant women either get vaccinated near their delivery date or immunize their newborns.

“This is the perfect time to get your vaccine for RSV if you have never gotten one,” the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health said in a statement to The Times.

RSV can spread through coughs or sneezes but also by touching a contaminated surface, such as a door handle, and then touching your face before washing your hands, health officials warn.

For the week ending Oct. 11, about 1.2% of emergency room visits nationwide among infants younger than 1 were due to RSV — up from 0.4% a month earlier, according to data posted by PopHIVE, a project led by the Yale School of Public Health.

“An RSV wave is starting to take hold,” epidemiologists Katelyn Jetelina and Hannah Totte wrote in the blog Your Local Epidemiologist.

RSV can be dangerous for infants, older adults and people with certain medical conditions, according to the

[See **RSV**, A8]

Witnessing American politics as norms fall away

By KEVIN RECTOR

Is President Trump going to restart nuclear weapons testing? When will this federal shutdown end? Will Californians pass Proposition 50, scramble the state’s congressional maps and shake up next year’s midterm elections?

Amid a swirl of high-stakes standoffs and unprecedented posturing by Trump, Gov. Gavin Newsom and other leaders in Washington and Sacramento, the future of U.S. politics, and California’s role therein, has felt wildly uncertain of late.

Political debate — around things such as sending military troops into American cities, cutting off food aid for the poor or questioning constitutional guarantees such as birthright citizenship — has become so untethered to long-standing norms that everything feels novel.

The pathways for taking political power — as with Trump’s teasing a potential third term, installing federal prosecutors without Senate confirmation, slashing federal budgets without congressional input and pressuring red states to

redistrict in his favor before a midterm election — have been so sharply altered that many Americans, and some historians and political experts, have lost confidence in U.S. democracy.

“It’s completely unprecedented, completely anomalous — representative, I think, of a major transformation of our normal political life,” said Jack Rakove, a Stanford University professor emeritus of history and political science.

“You can’t compare it to any other episode, any other period, any other set of events in American history. It is unique and radically novel in distressing ways,” Rakove said. “As soon as Trump was re-elected, we entered into a constitutional crisis. Why? Because Trump has no respect for constitutional structures.”

Abigail Jackson, a White House spokesperson, said in a statement that “President Trump’s unorthodox approach is why he has been so successful and why he has received massive support from the

[See **Democracy**, A6]

Over 1,000 items are stolen from Oakland museum site

By CLARA HARTER

A thief or crew of thieves recently carried out one of the largest art heists in California history, breaking into a storage facility for the Oakland Museum of California under the cover of darkness and making off with more than 1,000 precious artifacts.

Oakland police said the burglary took place just before 3:30 a.m. Oct. 15, which is four days before robbers stole a trove of priceless Napoleonic jewels from the the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Items stolen from the Oakland museum included Native American baskets, jewelry, laptops, daguerreotype photographs and intricately carved ivory tusks.

The Oakland Police Department is working with the FBI’s Art Crime Team to investigate the heist and retrieve the missing items.

“It was devastating. It feels like a real violation. It feels like somebody entering your home,” said museum Chief Executive Lori Foga-

[See **Heist**, A8]



Oakland Police Department



Oakland Police Department



DAVID M. BARREDA Los Angeles Times

AMONG the items stolen from the storage facility were daguerreotype photographs and intricately carved ivory tusks, top. Above, the Oakland museum.

Firefighters left smoldering site before Jan. 7

Palisades crews were ordered to pack up while the ground was still hot, texts show.

By PAUL PRINGLE AND ALENE TCHEKMEDYAN

Firefighters mopping up a small brush fire that authorities say reignited as the Palisades fire five days later were ordered to leave the original burn scene even though they complained the ground was still smoldering and rocks remained hot to the touch, according to firefighter text messages reviewed by The Times.

To the firefighters’ surprise, their battalion chief ordered them to roll up their hoses and pull out of the area on Jan. 2 — the day after the eight-acre blaze was declared contained — rather than stay to make sure there were no hidden embers that could spark a new fire, the text messages said.

On the morning of Jan. 7, according to federal authorities, strong winds stoked the remnants of the New Year’s Day blaze into the firestorm that killed 12 people and destroyed thousands of homes in Pacific Palisades, Malibu and Topanga.

In one text message, a firefighter who was at the scene on Jan. 2 wrote that the battalion chief had been

told it was a “bad idea” to leave the burn scar unprotected because of the visible signs of smoldering terrain. “And the rest is history,” the firefighter wrote in recent weeks.

The text exchanges among three firefighters and a third party provide previously undisclosed details about the Los Angeles Fire Department’s handling of the Lachman fire, which federal investigators say was deliberately set and had burned underground in a canyon root system until the winds rekindled it. The third party asked that he and the firefighters not be named because they were not authorized to speak publicly. The LAFD declined to comment on the text messages but has said officials believed the fire was fully extinguished.

The revelation that firefighters feared the Lachman fire could reignite comes as Pacific Palisades residents and others who lost homes and loved ones demand to know why more wasn’t done to protect their communities. Complaints that the city and state failed to properly prepare for and respond to the Jan. 7 fire are already the subject of numerous lawsuits and a Republican-led inquiry by a U.S. Senate committee.

This month, interim LAFD Chief Ronnie Villanueva said in a statement

[See **Texts**, A12]

Trump floats return to nuclear testing

His suggestion to resume testing nuclear weapons after three decades stirs alarm.

By MICHELLE L. PRICE AND CHRIS MEGERIAN

BUSAN, South Korea — President Trump appeared to suggest the U.S. would resume testing nuclear weapons for the first time in three decades, saying it would be on an “equal basis” with Russia and China.

The Kremlin pointed out that a global ban on nuclear testing has remained in place but warned that if any country resumes nuclear testing Russia would follow suit.

There was no indication the U.S. would start detonating warheads, but the president offered few details

about what seemed to be a significant shift in U.S. policy.

He made the announcement on social media minutes before he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday in South Korea. When he spoke to reporters later aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington, he offered little clarity.

The U.S. military already regularly tests its missiles that are capable of delivering a nuclear warhead, but it has not detonated the weapons since 1992. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which the U.S. signed but did not ratify, has been observed since its adoption by all countries possessing nuclear weapons, North Korea being the only exception.

Trump suggested, however, that changes were necessary because other coun-

[See **Nuclear**, A6]

More fossil fuels were burned in ’24 than ever before, scientists say

By IAN JAMES

Industries and individuals around the world burned record amounts of oil, gas and coal last year, releasing more greenhouse gases than ever before, a group of leading scientists said in a new report, warning that humanity is hurtling toward “climate chaos.”

The surge in global use of fossil fuels in 2024 contributed to extreme weather and devastating disasters including heat waves, storms, floods and wildfires.

“The planet’s vital signs are flashing red,” the scientists wrote in their annual report on the state of the climate. “The window to prevent the worst outcomes is rapidly closing.”

Some of the most alarming of Earth’s “vital signs,” the researchers said, include record heat in the oceans ravaging coral reefs, rapidly

shrinking ice sheets and increasing losses of forests burned in fires around the world. They said the extreme intensity of Hurricane Melissa this week is another sign of how the altered climate is threatening lives and communities on an unprecedented scale.

“The climate crisis has reached a really dangerous stage,” said William Ripple, the report’s co-lead author and a professor at Oregon State University. “It is vital that we limit future warming as rapidly as possible.”

There is still time to limit the damage, Ripple said. It means switching to cleanly made electricity and clean transportation, and consuming less beef and dairy and reducing other sources of harmful gases. These transitions are happening in some places, though not nearly fast enough.

For example, fossil fuel

[See **Report**, A8]



ERIC THAYER Los Angeles Times

THE Dodgers’ Teoscar Hernández is out at second.

Dodgers’ title defense in peril

Baseball’s richest team has gone from heavy World Series favorite to underdog, Bill Plaschke writes. **SPORTS, D1**

Trump to cut China tariffs

The president says he successfully negotiated with Xi Jinping about soybeans and rare earth elements. **BUSINESS, A11**

Weather

Clouds, then sun. L.A. Basin: 78/57. **B5**

ICE agents shoot driver in SoCal

The injured man is taken into custody, accused of backing his car toward officers in Ontario. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Comcast has eyes on Warner assets

NBCUniversal’s owner may bid on its rival’s HBO Max, TV, film studios. **BUSINESS, A10**



For the latest news, go to **latimes.com**.

Markets **A12**
Opinion Voices **A13**