

MILAN-CORTINA OLYMPICS



International Olympic Committee

A LEGEND’S DREAM IS DASHED

U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn crashes 13 seconds into the women’s downhill Sunday. She was treated for a left leg fracture. Her teammate Breezy Johnson won the event, America’s first gold of the Games. **SPORTS, D1**

Labor fights the rise of AI at work

Mental health staffers at Kaiser worry about job loss, data privacy and quality of care.

By QUEENIE WONG

Workers of one of the most powerful unions in California are forming an early front in the battle against artificial intelligence, warning it could take jobs and harm people’s health.

As part of negotiations with their employer, Kaiser Permanente workers have been pushing back against the giant healthcare provider’s use of AI. They are building demands around that issue and others, using picket lines and hunger strikes to help persuade Kaiser to use the powerful technology responsibly.

Kaiser says AI could save employees from tedious, time-consuming tasks such as taking notes and paperwork. Workers say that could be the first step down a slippery slope that leads to layoffs and damage to patient health.

“They’re sort of painting a map that would reduce their need for human workers and human clinicians,” said Ilana Marcucci-Morris, a licensed clinical social worker and part of the bargaining team for the National Union of Healthcare Workers, which is fighting for more protections against AI.

The 42-year-old Oakland-based therapist says she knows technology can be useful but warns that the consequences for patients have been “grave” when AI makes mistakes.

Kaiser says AI can help physicians and employees focus on serving members and patients.

[See **Kaiser**, A10]

Facing DOJ charges, L.A. protesters keep winning

By BRITTNY MEJIA

As they waited for jurors to return a verdict, the lawyers were on edge.

Rebecca Abel and Kyra Nickell, both deputy federal public defenders, had spent days in trial defending their client, whom the government accused of assaulting a federal law enforcement officer with a camera and later with a shove to the chest during an immigration protest in downtown Los Angeles last August.

There was the pressure of

securing justice for Isaias Lopez, 28, who they argued had pushed the officer in self-defense, after he walked into Lopez’s camera and then shoved it back toward him. Lopez faced up to eight years in prison if convicted.

And there was the pressure of keeping up an unprecedented winning streak against prosecutors, who have charged more than 100 people since June, alleging assaults on agents or interference with immigration enforcement.

The federal public defender’s office in Los Angeles

was 5-0 against the U.S. attorney’s office, winning every case brought to trial in the Central District of California, highly unusual for the perpetual underdogs.

They hoped Lopez’s case, which went to trial last month, would be No. 6.

“It’s normal to feel pressure for any trial, for any client. We want them to win; that’s why we’re bothering to take it to trial,” said Abel, who helped secure an acquittal for a client in the second protest case that went to trial. “But certainly in [See **Defense**, A8]



U.S. Army

GIANT vehicles convey supplies to a U.S. military base in Greenland in 1959.

Cold War-era Arctic plan fuels distrust of U.S., Trump

By PEDRO NAKAMURA

As the threat of nuclear conflict loomed during the Cold War, the U.S. Army hatched a top secret plan to conceal hundreds of missile launchers on rail lines hidden beneath the thick ice sheets of Greenland.

In case of a Soviet attack, nukes dispersed in thousands of miles of cut-and-cover tunnels could be launched within 20 minutes. The name for the effort was worthy of a Hollywood action movie: Project Iceworm.

“Iceworm formed part of the broader U.S. ‘polar strategy,’ which saw the Arctic as a crucial arena for Cold War nuclear deterrence — a direct route for both Soviet attack and U.S. strategic defense,” said Kristian Nielsen, a historian of science at Aarhus University in Denmark and co-author of the book “Camp Century: The Untold Story of America’s Secret Arctic Military Base Under the Greenland Ice.”

American fascination with Greenland as a forward military position is not new. Neither are Danish and Greenlandic doubts about the trustworthiness of the [See **Greenland**, A3]

How Olympic chair entered Epstein’s orbit

An Africa trip, racy emails threaten Casey Wasserman’s role at the LA28 committee.

By JENNY JARVIE, MEG JAMES AND DAKOTA SMITH

When Casey Wasserman boarded Jeffrey Epstein’s private jet for a two-week tour of Africa in 2002, he had little inkling he was embarking on a journey that could imperil his fortune.

The 28-year-old scion of Hollywood mogul Lew Wasserman was already the heir of a multimillion-dollar philanthropic foundation, the owner of a professional football team and the founder of a growing sports marketing firm. But many saw this as just the beginning for Wasserman, who seemed destined to follow his legendary grandfather as a business, political and culture titan.

He found an opportunity to step onto the world stage when former President Clinton invited him on a humanitarian trip to five African countries to promote AIDS/

HIV prevention and economic development in nations racked by disease and war.

Wasserman, a prolific Clinton fundraiser whose grandfather helped him win the 1992 presidential election, was joined by others including his then-wife, Laura, actor Kevin Spacey, Epstein and his longtime companion Ghislaine Maxwell.

Revelations around that trip and Wasserman’s risqué emails with Maxwell now threaten his legacy.

A trove of documents recently released by the U.S. Department of Justice offer new details about the journey to Africa and Wasserman’s intimate relationship with Maxwell — an entanglement that has jeopardized his leadership of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Wasserman boarded Epstein’s jet three years before the family of a 14-year-old girl in Palm Beach, Fla., reported she was molested by Epstein, triggering a decades-long investigation that resulted in Epstein’s 2008 conviction for procuring a child for prostitution and 2019 arrest for sex trafficking underage girls. Wasserman [See **Wasserman**, A7]

Water deadlock spirals downward

Supplies to California and other states are at risk as Colorado River negotiations stall.

By IAN JAMES

With the leaders of seven states deadlocked over the Colorado River’s deepening crisis, negotiations increasingly seem likely to fail — which could lead the federal government to impose unilateral cuts and spark lawsuits that would bring a complex court battle.

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum has urged negotiators for the states to reach a deal by Saturday, but substantial disagreements remain. A failure to reach a consensus could result in cuts in water deliveries to California by as much as a third, and by perhaps twice that for Arizona and Nevada — much larger reductions than the states have offered as part of the negotiations.

“All seven states know that if we’re unable to achieve an agreement, it would likely fall to the

courts, and that would be a lengthy and uncertain process,” Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said in an interview.

“I’m confident that Colorado would prevail based on the merits,” Polis said, but a court fight is “something that I don’t think any state desires.”

The Colorado River provides water for about 35 million people and 5 million acres of farmland, from the Rocky Mountains to northern Mexico. The water was originally divided among the states in 1922 under an agreement called the Colorado River Compact.

That agreement overpromised what the river could provide. And in the last quarter-century, relentless drought intensified by climate change has sapped the river’s flow and left its giant reservoirs severely depleted.

The three states of the Lower Basin — California, Arizona and Nevada — are at odds with the four Upper Basin states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico.

In a meeting late last [See **River**, A5]



KAYLA BARTKOWSKI Los Angeles Times

THE COLORADO River, seen near Blythe, Calif., in December, provides water for about 35 million people.

Demand for answers in severe ICE beating

By JACK BROOK, MICHAEL BIESECKER, JIM MUSTIAN AND CEDAR ATTANASIO

MINNEAPOLIS — Alberto Castañeda Mondragón says his memory was so jumbled after a beating by immigration officers that he initially could not remember he had a daughter and still struggles to recall treasured

moments such as the night he taught her to dance.

But the violence he endured last month in Minnesota while being detained is seared into his battered brain.

He remembers Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents pulling him from a friend’s car on Jan. 8 outside a St. Paul shopping center and throwing him to the ground, handcuffing

him, then punching him and striking his head with a steel baton. He remembers being dragged into an SUV and taken to a detention facility, where he said he was beaten again.

He also remembers the emergency room and the intense pain from eight skull fractures and five life-threatening brain hemorrhages.

“They started beating me right away when they ar-

rested me,” the Mexican immigrant recounted last week to the Associated Press, which recently reported on how his case contributed to mounting friction between federal immigration agents and a Minneapolis hospital.

Castañeda Mondragón, 31, is one of an unknown number of immigration detainees who, despite avoiding deportation during the [See **ICE**, A6]

What does Dow hitting 50,000 mean?

Historic milestone doesn’t translate to a healthy U.S. economy, Michael Hiltzik writes. **BUSINESS, A10**

Plan approved to kill Catalina deer

The eradication, part of an effort to restore the island ecosystem, will be carried out by professional shooters. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Mostly cloudy; warm.
L.A. Basin: 80/57. **B6**

U.S. Olympians speaking out

Athletes at the Winter Games decry the raids back home, defining patriotism on their terms. **SPORTS, D3**

