Los Angeles Times

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NIC COURY Associated Press

CREWS CLEAR brush above Castro Canyon as the Timber fire threatens homes and businesses in Big Sur.

Lakers to be sold, again, for record $12.5 billion

Iger, Kushner agree to deal with Dodgers owner as the feds probe his businesses.

By Thuc Nhi Nguyen, Broderick Turner and Bill Shaikin

Fourteen months after Dodgers owner Mark Walter agreed to buy the Lakers for a record-breaking sum, majority ownership of L.A.'s iconic NBA franchise is being sold to Joshua Kushner and Bob Iger for $12.5 billion, sources familiar with the matter but not authorized to speak publicly confirmed to The Times.

It is $2.5 billion more than the price when Walter's purchase of the team from the Buss family was ratified last October. The latest sale still has to be approved by the NBA's board of governors.

Iger, Disney's former chief executive, and Kushner, a venture capitalist and the younger brother of Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law, recently were looking into buying an expansion franchise as the NBA eyed new teams in Seattle and Las Vegas. Walter, who also owns the Dodgers and the WNBA's Sparks, has been at the center of a federal loan investigation.

"As lifelong NBA fans, we are deeply honored for the opportunity to become stewards of the Los Angeles Lakers, one of the most iconic sports franchises in the world," Kushner and Iger said in a statement. "We have immense respect for the leadership and vision of Jerry and Jeanie Buss. Our long-term commitment is to build on that foundation, compete at the highest level, and serve this extraordinary team, its fans, and the city of Los Angeles."

The Dodgers and Sparks were not involved in the deal, according to a source familiar with the transaction but not authorized to speak

[See **Lakers sale,** A7]

MORE COVERAGE

Big Sur caught in grim cycle of disaster

Timber fire is latest blow to a coastal locale of both natural beauty and threats.

By Hannah Fry

Few places have been more thoroughly battered by the force of climate change and Mother Nature than Big Sur.

Epic rains triggered landslides that closed Highway 1 into the famed coastal enclave for three years.

It reopened to much celebration in January. But a 10-mile stretch of Highway 1 is again closed because of a fast-moving fire threatening local landmarks, leaving Big Sur residents both on edge and frustrated.

"We are really in a recovery every year, going from surviving to thriving, so it's a bit of a kick in the teeth when you hit this kind of hiccup," said Kirk Gafill, who owns the popular Nepenthe restaurant on the picturesque coastal road.

The fire comes as Big Sur is trying to recover from the economic losses of being cut off for so long.

Locals were anticipating the busiest summer in years. Restaurants were packed with diners and hotels were fully booked with tourists looking to soak in the region's misty redwood forests and dramatic ocean views.

Then, the Timber fire exploded. It started over the weekend in the Los Padres National Forest near Loma Vista and had charred more than 3,700 acres as of Wednesday, threatening homes and businesses.

Big Sur has faced a relentless cycle of natural disasters over the last decade including destructive wildfires, mudflows, rockslides and coastal erosion that threatens its steep and fragile landscape and has isolated the iconic destination.

In the summer of 2016, the Soberanes fire burned more

[See **Big Sur,** A5]

Inside Ellison's frantic fight for Warner Bros.

By Meg James

Paramount Skydance Chief Executive David Ellison has exhibited a dizzying range of emotions this summer as the goal line for his company's coveted $111-billion Warner Bros. Discovery deal has moved farther away.

The 43-year-old tech scion initially exuded confidence that Hollywood's biggest merger in decades was on a fast track to completion by September. Ellison and others downplayed efforts by California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta to challenge the acquisition — until Bonta and 11 other Democratic state attorneys general gained momentum in their antitrust lawsuit, which now threatens to derail Paramount's Warner Bros. deal or, at least, make it significantly more expensive.

Ellison and his executives have vacillated from anger to acceptance. Last week, Ellison attempted a high-profile reputation reboot, extolling his love for movies and blaming politics for opposition to the deal.

The mogul has told investors the company is willing to negotiate a settlement with Bonta in hopes of completing the massive merger as soon as possible.

But Ellison also is making contingency plans to shift Paramount's historic home base from Melrose Avenue to Tennessee — or perhaps Texas — as early as this fall.

Paramount's board has approved Ellison's relocation plans, according to people familiar with the situation who were not authorized to speak publicly. Ellison shared the concept with his executive leadership team in a meeting last Wednesday but said his preference was to remain in California, these people said.

The proposal includes potentially selling the 65-acre Paramount lot in Hollywood — as well

[See **Paramount,** A11]

Becerra has a big lead in poll

Becerra maintains majority support from California voters

Percentage of likely voters' preference for state governor by group

	Becerra (D)	Undecided	Hilton (R)
Total likely voters	55%		37%
Party affiliation			
Democrats	88%		
Republicans			91%
No party/other	58%		30%
Region			
Los Angeles County	60%		31%
Orange County	45%		49%
San Diego County	50%		39%
North Coast/Sierras	44%		53%
Sacramento/North Valley	50%		45%
San Francisco Bay Area	69%		24%
San Joaquin Valley	38%		57%
Central Coast	62%		33%
Inland Empire	46%		48%
Gender			
Male	50%		42%
Female	61%		33%

A Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies poll conducted online Aug. 3-9 surveyed 2,310 registered California likely voters. Responses have a sampling error of about +/- 2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Institute of Governmental Studies

LORENA IÑIGUEZ ELEBEE Los Angeles Times

Governor candidate beats Hilton among fellow Democrats and independent voters.

By Nicole Nixon

SACRAMENTO — As the campaign for California governor heads into the general election, Democrat Xavier Becerra maintains a strong lead over Republican Steve Hilton, according to a new poll from the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies, co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Times.

Buoyed by the state's liberal voting base, Becerra had support from 55% of likely voters surveyed — compared with Hilton's 37%. The remaining 7% were undecided.

Like in a previous IGS poll conducted in late May, support for each candidate falls overwhelmingly along partisan lines: 88% of Democrats prefer Becerra and 91% of Republicans plan to back Hilton. No-party-preference voters also lean heavily toward Becerra, a former Biden administration Cabinet member, 58% to Hilton's 30%.

The two will face off in the Nov. 3 general election to replace Gov. Gavin Newsom,

[See **Governor,** A6]

Democrats' plan to rein in Trump

If it regains control of Congress, the party has a strategy. It may not be impeachment.

By Ana Ceballos

WASHINGTON — Democrats seeking to retake control of Congress are planning broad investigations into President Trump and his family's business dealings as part of an agenda focused on alleged corruption and economic harm, while keeping impeachment an option rather than an immediate priority.

The strategy would use subpoenas, committee hearings, possible criminal referrals and the budget as leverage to examine whether Trump, his family and close associates have used the federal government and public contracts for personal or financial gain.

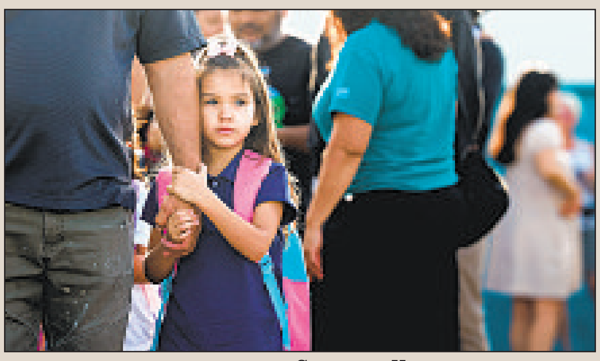
House Democrats in key leadership posts told The Times the groundwork is already being laid out for probes into the president's reported $2.2 billion in gains last year, the business ventures of his son-in-law Jared Kushner and his sons Eric and Don Jr., and the family's crypto projects. There is also interest in scrutinizing Trump's pardons and commutations to allies and the Department of Justice's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein case.

With less than three months before the midterm elections, the prospect of sweeping investigations has hung over Trump as his approval ratings hit new lows and Democrats gain momentum. But the White House has dismissed Democrats' plans as partisan and

[See **Democrats,** A6]

A primary upset in Wisconsin

Moderate candidate for governor beats a progressive in what could be a bellwether. **NATION, A4**



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

FRESH START AT LAUSD

A student arrives at Gledhill Street Elementary. The district's new year opened on a hopeful note despite looming cuts, stench. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Anaheim beats Bay Area's income growth

Irvine and Santa Ana rank high as tech and research bring in well-paid employees.

By Annika Duneja

Despite the economic angst and billionaire exodus, California has been recording some of the highest income growth in the country.

Surprisingly, a recent survey of metropolitan areas showed that Silicon Valley didn't lead the state, but Anaheim, Irvine and Santa Ana were near the top of the list.

A study by financial advising company SmartAsset of the 94 largest population centers in the U.S. looked at real income growth in 2024, and the three Orange County neighborhoods ranked in the top 15. Real income takes inflation into account as well as income from investments and retirement income.

While Silicon Valley is red-hot with billions being spent on AI, income hasn't been rising as much there, according to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey the study used.

Instead, Anaheim came out on top with the second-highest increase in the country at 16%. Irvine and Santa Ana ranked seventh and 14th, respectively, in terms of income growth.

Some economists were puzzled by the results but said higher minimum wage and the healthcare industry probably helped with growth.

[See **Income,** A11]

LAPD reviews protest response

A 62-page report draws criticism for having no analysis of disciplinary action, use of less-lethal arms. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Taylor Farms recalls jalapeños

Certain products may have peppers linked to salmonella outbreak in 27 states. **BUSINESS, A9**

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

Weather
Partly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 83/68. **B6**

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