



TRAFFIC moves on the Vincent Thomas Bridge past shipping containers at the Port of L.A. on Friday. MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

RULING STOKES FEAR OF VOTER PURGES

Justices let states use federal data to target noncitizens, a process seen as error-prone.

By DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Friday upheld President Trump's expanded use of government data to search for noncitizens who are registered to vote.

The justices granted an emergency appeal from Trump administration lawyers and set aside a judge's order that blocked use of this data on the grounds it was error-prone, particularly for naturalized citizens.

Justices Ketanji Brown Jackson, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan dissented, citing the risk of errors.

The effect of the decision is likely to be limited, other than to highlight Trump's distrust of elections and his unproven claims that a large number of illegal voters are casting ballots.

The administration had, for example, claimed that Nevada had more than 15,000 noncitizens on its voter rolls, only to have state election officials confirm these voters were citizens and lawful voters.

New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill learned in July that because of a software error, more than 6,000 people had been wrongly registered to vote when they registered their car.

But it is rare to find noncitizens who choose to cast a vote even though they know it is illegal to do so.

The decision clears the way for states to check their voter rolls using data from Social Security and other records.

Individuals could be targeted for an inquiry, but federal law forbids late purges of the voters rolls.

Voting rights advocates said they feared the flawed data will have an effect on legal voters.

"Today's decision is profoundly disappointing, as it puts millions of Americans at risk of being unlawfully targeted by the administration's unreliable voter purge database weeks before the midterm elections," said the League of Women Voters.

"As the court noted in its decision, it is flatly illegal for states to conduct mass removals of voters from the rolls within 90 days of an election," said Common Cause President Virginia Kase Solomón. "If any state official attempts to disenfranchise eligible voters us- [See Ruling, A8]

Federal clash with state over air rules escalates

House defies judge in moving to reverse California maritime emissions standards.

By TONY BRISCOE

Congress recently challenged California's authority to regulate air pollution from cargo ships and large commercial boats, opening the door to dirtier air in port-side communities.

The U.S. House of Representatives last week narrowly voted to take away the ability of California to force

large ships to run on electricity when they're in port, instead of running on their giant diesel engines. A second vote also sought to end requirements for cleaner engines on some commercial boats.

These regulations were designed to eliminate unhealthy pollution near harbor communities, such as Long Beach and Wilmington. The twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are the largest fixed source of smog-forming air pollution in metropolitan Los Angeles.

The votes — to revoke federal waivers that allow

California to regulate maritime pollution — took place despite a federal judge's scathing ruling that the way the Trump administration was pursuing the deregulation is not legal.

They were the latest attempt by the Trump administration and Republican lawmakers to roll back California pollution regulations and do away with the state's authority to adopt vehicle pollution controls stricter than the federal government's. Last year, the president and Republican-majority Congress revoked three other federal waivers, [See Pollution, A9]

Canada trade war adds challenge in tight Senate races

The dispute stands to heighten economic anxiety, especially in 5 crucial border states.

By JUSTINE MCDANIEL

WASHINGTON — President Trump's trade war with Canada could intensify the headwinds Republicans are navigating ahead of the November midterms, with its effects poised to reverberate in northern battleground states with crucial Senate races.

With the election less than six weeks away, Republicans are facing an increasingly bleak outlook, as new polls this week showed voters favoring Democrats by as much as 12 points amid widespread cost-of-living anxiety and low approval for Trump.

The escalating beef with Canada — Trump attacked the country anew on social media Wednesday — stands to heighten voters' economic worries and add to the GOP's political challenge in dead-heat races, analysts said.

"It doesn't make things easier. It's not helping," said Rusty Hills, a University of

Michigan public policy professor and onetime chair of the Michigan Republican Party.

The president's unpopular policies on the war in Iran, the economy and data centers have already handed Republican candidates the tough task of appearing responsive to Americans' frustration with cost-of-living issues without alienating Trump and his voter base.

The trade war, said Lance Dutton, a Maine Republican media strategist, puts "another log on the fire" of the affordability issue.

The tariffs have appeared unpopular in recent polling, including among a majority of independent voters. Though they are not expected to dramatically increase consumer prices, they could affect voters' perception of the economy — and even small economic impacts on certain industries, such as auto manufacturing in Michigan, could have an effect in very close midterm races, experts said.

Trump's new import bans on some Canadian goods are set to begin next week, a response to retaliatory tariffs Canada levied earlier this month. Trump argues that Canada has [See Trade war, A6]

Trump's summitry with Xi is all pomp

Lack of substance reveals the limits of the U.S. president's approach to statecraft.

By MICHAEL WILNER AND ANA CEBALLOS

WASHINGTON — Expectations were low entering President Trump's meetings with China's leader, Xi Jinping, this week, after officials on both sides tempered hopes for a breakthrough. Yet the summit's stark lack of substance surprised even the closest China watchers.

It was a visual affair designed to project a new phase of managed competition between a prevailing superpower and a rising one — a message that Washington and Beijing are ultimately capable of responsible leadership. But even a cursory look beneath the surface revealed the challenges ahead for the world's

most consequential bilateral relationship.

Industry pleas and bipartisan calls for Trump to negotiate a meaningful framework on artificial intelligence fell on deaf ears. A trade truce between the two sides was extended for a mere two months. And Trump again warned Xi not to assist Iran as the U.S. war there continues — a warning that, so far, has gone unheeded, with millions of dollars' worth of crucial Chinese parts reportedly arriving in Tehran by the plane-load.

"The U.S.-China relationship has settled into a managed stalemate. It has stabilized at the top without stabilizing underneath," said Craig Singleton, a senior fellow on China at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"The elaborate pageantry matters precisely because there is still relatively little substantive progress to showcase," Singleton said. [See Summit, A6]

El Niño's soggy wrath yields a hidden benefit

Major storms due to bring precious rain to drought-stricken state. But how to capture it?

By IAN JAMES

With a strong El Niño increasing the odds of big storms this fall and winter, California is on alert for possible flooding. But if it delivers a wet punch, it will also bring an upside: a bonanza of water.

How prepared is the state to capitalize on El Niño? And what more can it do to take advantage of an extremely wet year?

Experts say California has made progress capturing more stormwater, but there is still more it can do.

Los Angeles County uses a network of 27 spreading grounds, where artificial basins fill up when storms send torrents cascading down from the mountains into the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys. The water sinks into porous soil and

replenishes the groundwater.

"It really makes a big difference during these wet years that we capture as much of that water as possible," said Sterling Klippel, assistant deputy director of the L.A. County Public Works Department. "Whenever we have a storm season with above-average rainfall, that means we are capturing a lot of water, and the water that we capture during these wet storm seasons really helps to bridge the gap in water supply."

During the 2025-26 storm season, the Public Works Department estimated the system captured as much water as 3.3 million Angelenos use in a year.

If this El Niño brings major storms, the L.A. area could take in even more water underground, enabling cities to pump it out later to deliver to taps.

While managers of Southern California's flood control system are preparing for an active storm season, some of the biggest ef- [See El Niño, A8]



BAGDAD CAFE on Route 66, site of the 1987 cult film, battles for survival. ERIC THAYER Los Angeles Times

COLUMN ONE

Still magic in the Mojave

Famed cafe is adrift, but tourists track it down

By HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS
REPORTING FROM
NEWBERRY SPRINGS, CALIF.

Four decades ago, the cult hit "Bagdad Cafe" was filmed at a ramshackle diner in the Mojave Desert.

The tale of two women in the lonely landscape — a hardworking, rifle-wielding cafe owner and a stranded

German tourist with a suitcase full of lederhosen — captivated viewers, particularly in Europe and Japan.

Busloads of international tourists rolled up to the actual Bagdad Cafe on a cracked, sunbaked stretch of Route 66.

Real-life proprietor Andrea Pruett, a sweet but steely Southerner who kept her own gun behind the counter, greeted them in French and German, then fed them buffalo burgers and omelets.

[See Bagdad Cafe, A9]



STEVE MARCUS Las Vegas Sun

SPARKS FIRE COACH

Lynne Roberts, who compiled a record of 36-49 over two seasons, was dismissed Friday after a season-finale loss to the Valkyries. **SPORTS, B12**

Government foots bill for Trump ad

A GOP senator says the taxpayer-funded spot "feels like Viktor Orban," Hungary's ex-leader. **NATION, A5**

Biologists move sea turtle eggs

As a precaution ahead of waves, the nests will incubate at Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather

Partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 90/70. **B8**

