



A FARMWORKER picks grapes in a Fresno County field. She is paid 36 cents for each paper sheet she fills.

A new pressure point in Iran war

Takeover of Red Sea strait by Houthi rebels adds another threat to global shipping lanes.

By NABIH BULOS

BAB EL-MANDEB, Yemen — To visit Bab el-Mandeb is to understand that old adage about looks being deceiving. For this humble fishing village in Yemen, a tumbledown grouping of barely-there huts nestled between the water and an imposing mountain range, stands sentinel over one of the world's most vital waterways.

The village shares its name with the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the narrow passageway connecting the Red Sea with the Arabian Sea that's become another flash point in the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

"You hear so much about Bab el-Mandeb, you'd think we would be like New York, with skyscrapers and money," said Saleh, a 58-year-old resident who, like all people interviewed here, refused to give their full name to avoid reprisals.

"So many ships pass near here. If the Yemeni government knew how to invest in it, we would be rich. We should be bringing in billions of dollars. Instead, look around you," he said, pausing as his gaze took in the sorry-looking boats haphazardly laid on the beach.

"We have nothing." Saleh was interviewed in January, when Bab el-Mandeb was thrust into the power struggle between [See Waterway, A4]

Trump rejects Iran's proposal

He calls deal to reopen Strait of Hormuz under certain conditions "not acceptable." **WORLD, A3**

TOXIC EXPOSURE GOES UNPUNISHED

Regulatory system to protect farmworkers from pesticides is haphazardly enforced, records show

By ROBERT J. LOPEZ

In California's Sacramento Valley, a grower was cited for multiple pesticide safety violations in a stone fruit orchard.

In the sweeping farmlands near the Central Coast, a seed supplier that cultivates peppers, vegetables and fruit was hit with more than two dozen pesticide safety violations, some of them serious offenses that caused health or environmental hazards.

And in the San Joaquin Valley, an agricultural retailer with a history of pesticide safety violations was cited for failing to provide protective equipment for workers and post emergency medical information in the fields.

In all, nearly 18,000 regulatory actions were taken by county pesticide safety inspectors across California from the start of 2020 through June 2025. Fewer than 30% resulted in fines, though, according to state enforcement records.

When regulators did levy penalties, they were often as low as \$50 to \$250, and they varied widely from county to county for the same violations, according to an analysis of more than 40,000 state en-

forcement records obtained through public records requests.

The regulatory system designed to protect farmworkers from pesticides is enforced haphazardly across California. Even in cases where regulators found that companies endangered workers or committed multiple violations, few were penalized for all their citations. Instead, they received warnings or notices to correct problems for cases in which they were not penalized, an investigation by Capital & Main has found.

In interviews, dozens of farmworkers reported suffering from nausea, burning eyes or irritated throats due to chemical-laced fields. Most said they didn't report the problems because they feared retaliation or lacked confidence in the regulatory system.

"Yes, there are laws," said Jesus, his face wrinkled from years of harvesting garlic, pruning grape vines and picking blackberries in the sun-baked San Joaquin Valley.

"But unfortunately, at times the law [See Pesticides, A8]

El Niño threatens beloved Surfliner

A stormy winter could worsen conditions that led to shutdowns

By SUMMER LIN



AN AMTRAK Pacific Surfliner train passes along the coastal tracks in San Clemente this month.

WINTER WARNING: How to prepare for the "super" El Niño. **CALIFORNIA, B1**
BODY COUNT: Global death toll of 450,000 from heat is forecast. **CALIFORNIA, B3**

A quarry no one saw coming in Wrightwood

When residents of Wrightwood, a pine-studded village near Mt. Baldy, learned that a massive quarry was planned nearby, they followed a familiar playbook.

They organized a nonprofit, drafted a petition and raised funds for a legal challenge. They created T-shirts, ball caps and tote bags. They won support from powerful politicians.

But they may be seven years too late. By the time they learned about the quarry planned on 420 acres in lush Lone Pine Canyon, where ultra-high purity calcium carbonate would be extracted by blasting down about 1,600 feet across open pits, the project had long ago received a

By the time residents learned about the planned mining site, it had long ago received a key approval

By ALEX WIGGLESWORTH

key approval.

In 2019, after two meetings that flew so under the radar that only one member of the public spoke out, the San Bernardino County Planning Commission voted 3 to 2 to grant "vested rights" to the quarry, exempting the project from a comprehensive environmental review.

The nonprofit recently formed by the residents, called the Lone Pine Canyon Protection Alliance, has petitioned for a reconsideration of the Planning Commission's decision. State wildlife officials have raised concerns about the potential impact of the quarry on bumblebees, desert [See Wrightwood, A10]

Scrambling for a message on immigration

Trump supercharged ICE. Now battleground candidates aren't sure how to talk about it.

By ANDREA CASTILLO

WASHINGTON — Since the 2024 election, Democratic congressional candidates have reached a consensus about how to broadly discuss the border — make it secure — but they still lack a cohesive message about ICE.

Some advocate abolishing the agency, while others offer visions for how to rein it in and reform it.

Meanwhile, for Republicans, President Trump's immigration policies have offered a win on one issue (the border) while creating another issue that many voters find troubling (violence during raids).

Some battleground Republicans are distancing themselves from Trump and have shifted from talking about mass deportations to

emphasizing deporting criminals.

Most voters don't care more about immigration than the cost of living. But it remains an important issue, and for both Republicans and Democrats, the balance in messaging about immigration is delicate, as about half of Americans see the administration's tactics against immigrants as too aggressive.

As the Nov. 3 midterms approach, Democratic candidates in various states including Illinois, Minnesota and New Jersey have said Immigration and Customs Enforcement should be abolished. In Michigan, progressive Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed has said as much — and taken aim at fellow party members.

"The idea that somehow we can't say 'abolish ICE' because we're so afraid of what they're going to say, when we've seen ICE terrorize people in our streets," he said before Michigan's Senate primary in July. "To me, [See Battleground, A7]

High-profile death at sober living home

Questions arise over suspected overdose of Cindy Crawford's son at a recovery facility.

By RICHARD WINTON AND CLARA HARTER

Presley Gerber, the son of supermodel Cindy Crawford who spoke eloquently about his struggles with addiction and mental health, entered the mansion-like sober living home in an elite section of Santa Monica on Saturday night.

The next morning, he was found dead of what police said was a drug overdose.

His death has brought much mourning as well as questions about how he could overdose on drugs while inside the Resolutions Living home.

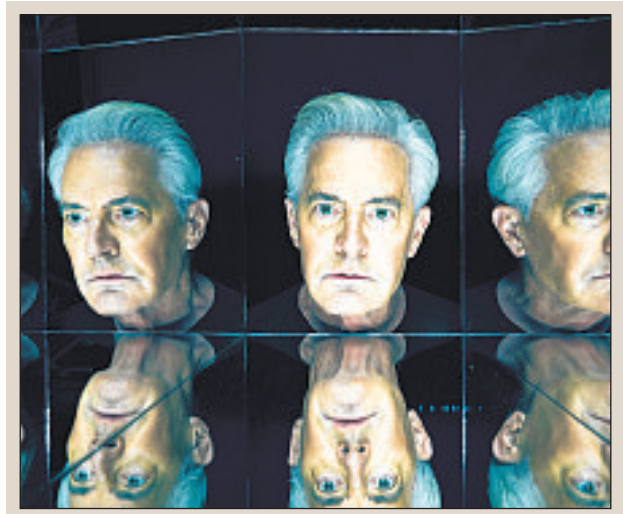
Santa Monica Police are investigating the source of the drugs he had taken, while the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner is

awaiting toxicology results before making a finding on the cause of death. It comes amid growing scrutiny of the industry.

The Resolutions Living home operates in a regulatory gray area and is not authorized to provide medical care. There is no state agency in charge of monitoring or tracking the locations of sober living homes, which are protected under state and federal law as residences of people with disabilities. This situation has prompted calls for more regulations.

The California Department of Health Services is investigating whether Resolutions Living is providing any services that would require a state license after receiving a complaint about the sober living home Wednesday, according to department spokesperson Anthony Cava.

Beyond being the site of the death, it's unclear what role the Resolutions Living [See Gerber, A13]



CHRISTOPHER PATEY For The Times

HIS STRANGE UNIVERSE

Cult television actor Kyle MacLachlan digs into his multiple selves across the decades in a candid new memoir. **ENTERTAINMENT, E4**

CNN is left off Air Force One

The White House excluded the network from a presidential trip in its latest media restriction. **NATION, A6**

Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 86/65. **B8**

Business **A11**
Opinion Voices **A14**

UCLA crushes Maryland 54-3

Bruins look relentless as Bob Chesney opens his tenure as coach at 4-0. **SPORTS, D1**

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