



GROUNDKEEPER Manuel Nava leaps over a flooded stretch of Pacific Coast Highway in Sunset Beach.

Winter rains fall, and so do the records

Another major storm is forecast, bringing threats of more flooding and slides.

BY HANNAH FRY AND ALEX WIGGLESWORTH

California's already wet winter is breaking rainfall records, with another powerful storm moving in this weekend along with the threat of new flooding and mudslides.

After a remarkable dry streak in 2024 that helped fuel last January's firestorms, this winter is making up for it, with some areas already approaching average rain totals for the entire season.

"It's been an interesting season," said Mike Wofford, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard. "We're way above normal for precipitation."

The latest storm will usher in gusty wind, more precipitation and possible flooding in burn scar areas.

The cold front moving into the state from the northwest is expected to reach the Los Angeles area by Saturday and bring rain and high-elevation snow through Sunday. In Los Angeles, the rain is expected to be less punishing than the previous storm that triggered significant flooding, road closures and rescues, but it will be heavier along the Central Coast, Wofford said.

The one bright spot is fire conditions. With L.A. about to mark the first anniversary of the Palisades and Eaton fires, the wet winter offers some protections — at least in the short term.

"The amount of rain that we've gotten is likely going to ensure that we're not going to have any large fires in the next couple of weeks, but beyond that we really can't say," said David Acuña, a battalion chief with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. "If we were to transition into a dry spell, it does not take very long for those green and brown grasses to dry out completely."

A lot will depend on how much rain falls in the next several months, he added.

The Los Angeles area has already seen higher-than-normal precipitation this rainy season, which began Oct. 1, with storms soaking the region each month with particularly strong systems hitting over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The final rainy days of 2025 helped pull California almost completely out of drought conditions, according to the California Department of Water Resources.

[See Storm, A14]

Billionaire tax pitched as lifeline for Medi-Cal

The proposal is already dividing Democrats — and running into California's aversion to levies

By Seema Mehta and Caroline Petrow-Cohen

The fiery debate about a proposed ballot measure to tax California's billionaires has sparked some soul-searching across the state.

While the idea of a one-time tax on more than 200 people has a long way to go before getting onto the ballot and would need to be passed by voters in November, the tempest around it captures the zeitgeist of angst and anger at the core of California. Silicon Valley is minting new millionaires while millions of the state's residents face the loss of healthcare coverage and struggle with inflation.

Supporters of the proposed billionaire tax say it is one of the few ways the state can provide healthcare for its most vulnerable. Opponents warn it would squash the innovation that has made the state rich and prompt an exodus of wealthy entrepreneurs from the state.

The controversial measure is already creating fractures among powerful Democrats who enjoy tremendous sway in California. Progressive icon Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) quickly endorsed the billionaire tax, while Gov. Gavin Newsom denounced it.

The Golden State's rich residents say they are tired of feeling targeted. Their success has not only created unimaginable wealth but also jobs and better lives for Californians, they say, yet they feel they are being punished.

"California politics forces together some of the richest areas of America with some of the poorest, often separated by just a freeway," said Thad Kousser, a political science professor at UC San Diego. "The impulse to force those with extreme wealth to share their riches is only natural, but often runs into the reality of our anti-tax traditions as well as modern concerns about stifling entrepreneurship or driving job creation out of the state."

The state budget in California is already largely dependent on income taxes paid by its highest earners. Because of that, revenues are prone to volatility, hinging on capital gains from investments, bonuses to executives and windfalls from new stock offerings, and are notoriously difficult for the state to predict.

The tax proposal would cost the state's richest residents about \$100 billion

[See Billionaire, A12]



IRANIAN demonstrators gather for a pro-government rally in southern Tehran.

Trump and top Iranian officials exchange threats over protests

By Jon Gambrell

DUBAI — President Trump and top Iranian officials exchanged dueling threats Friday as widening protests swept across parts of the Islamic Republic, further escalating tensions between the countries after the United States bombed Iranian nuclear sites in June.

At least seven people have been killed so far in violence surrounding the demonstrations, which were sparked in part by the collapse of Iran's rial currency but have increasingly seen crowds chanting antigovernment slogans.

The protests, now in their sixth day, have become the biggest in Iran since 2022, when the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody triggered nationwide demonstrations. However, the demonstrations have yet to be countrywide and have not been as intense as those surrounding the death of Amini, who was detained over not wearing her hijab or headscarf, to the liking of authorities.

Trump initially wrote on his Truth Social platform, warning Iran that if it "violently kills peaceful protesters," the United States "will come to their rescue."

"We are locked and loaded and ready to go,"

Trump wrote, without elaborating.

Shortly after, Ali Larijani, a former parliament speaker who serves as the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, alleged on the social platform X that Israel and the U.S. were stoking the demonstrations.

He offered no evidence to support the allegation, which Iranian officials have repeatedly made during years of protests sweeping the country.

"Trump should know that intervention by the U.S. in the domestic problem corresponds to chaos in the entire region and the destruction of the U.S. interests,"

[See Protests, A3]

Trump's power grew in 2025, courtesy of court

Justices set aside rulings that blocked his orders but put two key checks in place.

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., ended the first year of President Trump's second term with a record of rulings that gave him much broader power to control the federal government.

In a series of fast-track decisions, the justices granted emergency appeals and set aside rulings from district judges who blocked Trump's orders from taking effect.

With the court's approval, the administration dismissed thousands of federal employees, cut funding for education and health research grants, dismantled the agency that funds foreign aid and cleared the way for the U.S. military to reject transgender troops.

But the court also put two important checks on the president's power.

In April, the court twice ruled — including in a post-

midnight order — that the Trump administration could not secretly whisk immigrants out of the country without giving them a hearing before a judge.

Upon taking office, Trump claimed migrants who were alleged to belong to "foreign terrorist" gangs could be arrested as "enemy aliens" and flown secretly to a prison in El Salvador.

Roberts and the court blocked such secret deportations and said the 5th Amendment entitles immigrants, like citizens, a right to "due process of law." Many of the arrested men had no criminal records and said they never belonged to a criminal gang.

Those who face deportation "are entitled to notice and opportunity to challenge their removal," the justices said in *Trump vs. J.G.G.*

They also required the government to "facilitate" the release of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who had been wrongly deported to El Salvador. He is now back in Maryland but may face further criminal charges or efforts to deport him.

And last week, Roberts and the court barred Trump

[See Justices, A6]

Driving 100 mph could cost license

State's pilot program tightens discipline in bid to curb reckless behavior and deaths.

By Karen Garcia

Californians who are caught speeding at more than 100 mph will now face new disciplinary actions imposed by the Department of Motor Vehicles that could include losing their driving privileges.

It's the latest in a series of moves in recent years aimed at trying to reverse increases in fatal car accidents across California. Since 2010, fatalities and serious injuries related to speeding and aggressive driving increased by 52%, according to the California Department of Transportation.

The pilot program, called Forwarded Actions for Speeding Tickets, is a joint

effort by the DMV and the California Highway Patrol, according to the California State Transportation Agency. The program was launched last month.

"We want to take immediate action against dangerous drivers before their carelessness leads to a deadly crash," said Steve Gordon, director of the DMV. "We're being proactive, and together with our CHP partners, we're ready to put the brakes on this reckless behavior."

On average, CHP officers issue about 1,600 citations each month to drivers flying down the road at speeds in excess of 100 mph, according to the California State Transportation Agency. In 2024, the CHP issued more than 18,000 such citations.

Under the new pilot program, every driver who is ticketed by the CHP for exceeding 100 mph — regardless of their prior driving

[See Speeding, A14]



SWISS RESORT FIRE

Mourners gather near Le Constellation bar, where a blaze killed 40 people and injured 119. Candles may have ignited the fire. **WORLD, A2**

BYD tops Tesla in EV deliveries

Chinese automaker sells 2.26 million electric vehicles in 2025, surpassing the industry giant. **BUSINESS, A10**

Weather Cool with rain. L.A. Basin: 61/55. **B8**

Markets **A12**

Opinion Voices **A13**

True granddaddy deserves respect

Rose Bowl should host the CFP title game every year, writes Bill Plaschke. **SPORTS, B12**

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