



SNOWSHOERS travel the Pacific Crest Trail last month near Donner Pass, where the UC Berkeley Central Sierra Snow Laboratory found Tuesday that the snowpack was about half of the average for this time of year.

Much-needed precipitation is en route — but will it stick?

Amid ‘snow drought,’ California looks to upcoming atmospheric rivers

By IAN JAMES

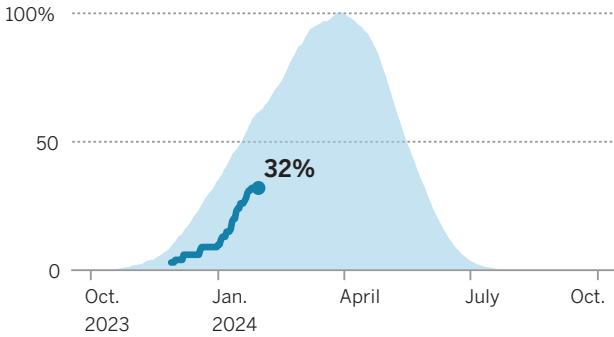
Despite forecasts of heavy rain and possible flooding in the coming days, state water managers are warning that the “snow drought” in California’s Sierra Nevada could remain for the rest of the winter and into the spring.

Storms that are moving in from the Pacific Ocean are forecast to bring more snow to the mountains starting this week, along with torrential rains in other parts of the state. But most of California’s storms this year have been shaped by warm conditions, bringing more rain and less snow — a trend that experts say is influenced by the current El Niño conditions on top of

Sierra Nevada snowpack

The snowpack is now 32% of the average peak, around April 1, and 52% of the average for this time of year.

Percentage of April 1 average



Data as of Jan. 30
California Department of Water Resources

Los Angeles Times

rising temperatures driven by human-caused climate change.

“Even though the storms during January slightly helped out our snowpack, we’re only about halfway of where we should be for this time of year,” said Sean de Guzman, flood operations manager for the California Department of Water Resources.

After conducting the state’s second seasonal

[See **Snow drought**, A5]

First of two major storms arrives

Officials up and down the state are bracing for flooding and power outages. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Fire deep inside Castaic landfill raises alarms over toxic fumes

Officials, residents criticize its operator for gas and water leaks, late reporting.

By TONY BRISCOE

Vapor hisses from surface fissures. Bubbling ponds of effluent form “rivers of odorous waste.” And at times, steaming hot liquid bursts into the air like a geyser.

As operators struggle to contain a smoldering fire and pressure buildup deep within Chiquita Canyon Landfill, air quality regulators are raising alarms over the potential health risks posed by the toxic fumes escaping the Castaic facility.

Environmental regulators say the local air and water samples have contained elevated levels of benzene, a cancer-causing chemical that evaporates easily. They also have reprimanded Waste Connections, the landfill’s owner, for failing to report the leaks when they first occurred and for not providing area residents

with air quality data.

“The landfill operator is already collecting much of this air pollution information, but it isn’t being released to the community in a way that lets residents make informed choices to protect their own health,” said Jeff Lindberg of the California Air Resources Board.

The gas and water leaks are being driven by a rare chemical reaction that has generated scorching heat and intense pressure within a 35-acre portion of the landfill. South Coast Air Quality Management District officials have described the conditions as almost volcanic and, in recent months, a white vapor has been observed hissing through long cracks in the face of the reaction zone.

The crisis has renewed calls to shut down the facility and prompted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to step in and oversee efforts to contain the growing problem. It was also the center of discussion during two days of testimony and public comments at a recent air district meeting.

[See **Landfill**, A5]



South Coast Air Quality Management District

AS GARBAGE smolders deep underground at Chiquita Canyon Landfill, polluted water has burst above ground. Area residents want the facility shut down.

Taylor, Travis and MAGA’s fake Super Bowl plot

LORRAINE ALI
NEWS AND CULTURE CRITIC

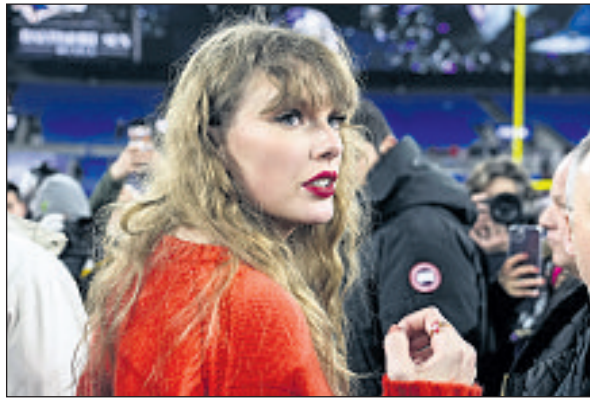
Stop whatever you’re doing right now because odds are that you’re not operating out of free will. That’s right. The Taylor Swift tune you’re mindlessly humming while scrolling past Super Bowl ads on the way to checking your email isn’t just a harmless earworm, at least according to the MAGA Mediaverse.

It’s all part of a nefarious plot to subvert the 2024 election and hand it to Joe Biden.

In a triangulation of paranoia, politics and pop music, right-wing influencers warned this week that superstar Swift and her co-conspirators, the NFL, are part of a widespread scheme to tank Donald Trump’s chances of winning back the White House.

This carefully constructed web of deceit has been uncovered/fabricated by misinformation agents from Fox News to OAN to regional talk radio, many of whom have also spent the last few months

[See **Ali**, A7]



ALEX BRANDON Associated Press

THE TAYLOR Swift “psy-op” story is so facile it feels generous to even label it a conspiracy theory.

Garvey’s image collides with reality

Three of the Senate candidate’s grown children paint an unflattering portrait of their dad

By Nathan Fenno and Adam Elmahrek



BRIAN ROTHMULLER Icon Sportswire

FORMER DODGER Steve Garvey with his wife, Candace, at a ceremony at Dodger Stadium in 2019. He has portrayed himself as “a devoted family man.”

The nickname “Mr. Clean” has lingered since the height of Steve Garvey’s fame as a sweet-swinging first baseman for the Dodgers and Padres, as much a reflection of his success on the field as the wholesome, All-American image that followed him off of it.

Charming. Handsome. Unfailingly polite. Eager to sign autographs. Devoted to helping charities. A media darling. A successful businessman. All with a made-for-television grin.

Garvey is “a devoted family man,” read a biography once posted on his website. “As a father of seven children, Garvey understands that in the ever-changing world we live in there is a great necessity of being a man of honor, integrity and quality.”

Now, as the Republican front-runner in the race for a California U.S. Senate seat, Garvey has avoided detailed policy positions, instead relying on his name recognition and clean-cut image. His campaign website describes him as a “true role model,” he praised the par-

Social media CEOs are grilled

Senators confront the leaders of TikTok, X, Meta and others over their platforms’ risk to children. **NATION, A4**

Public drinking zones proposed

Letting people imbibe on the street in places would help businesses rebound, author of SB 969 says. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Fed opts to leave rates unchanged

The central bank signals that any reductions probably would come months down the road. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather
Morning downpours.
L.A. Basin: 59/48. **B6**



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