

GOP to woo Asians, Latinos in O.C.

‘Modestly partisan’ Republicans may be key in competitive congressional races.

By Hannah Fry

Robert Baca's political compass has always pointed toward the Republican Party, but lately he hasn't felt as at home in the GOP.

Though he voted for Donald Trump in the last two presidential elections, Baca distances himself from the culture wars that seem to fire up today's die-hard Republicans. Instead, he wants Washington to tackle the turbulent economy and rising costs of daily life.

He's been called a RINO — short for “Republican in name only” — when he's suggested that both parties should work together. He still backs conservative candidates most of the time, but he's not a sure GOP vote anymore.

“It's not about the party for me,” said Baca, 46. “It's about the policy and the person.”

Baca lives in one of four Orange County congressional districts that are expected to be among the nation's most competitive in the 2024 election as Republicans and Democrats fight to control the House.

Baca, a small-business owner, is also part of an important emerging group in the Orange County political landscape that UC Irvine researchers in a poll published Wednesday described as “modestly partisan” Republicans. This group differs from the traditional GOP voter in a few key areas: they're wealthier, they're diverse, they're more socially liberal and they're less resistant to being taxed to help solve issues related to climate change and home-

[See **GOP**, A10]



SUNDAY ALAMBA Associated Press

MAKOKO, NIGERIA

A child in a slum stands on a boat surrounded by filthy water.



OHAD ZWIGENBERG Associated Press

WEST BANK

Camels drink from a shallow puddle in the Jordan Valley.



ANMAR KHALIL Associated Press

DHI QAR, IRAQ

A fisherman walks across a dry patch of land during a long drought.



EVGENIY MALOLETKA Associated Press

KHERSON, UKRAINE

A church is surrounded by floodwaters after a dam was breached.

Clashes over water increase globally

Researchers find disturbing rise in violent incidents and attacks on civilian infrastructure

By IAN JAMES

Six months ago, an explosion ripped apart Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine, unleashing floods that killed 58 people, devastated the landscape along the Dnipro River and cut off water to productive farmland.

The destruction of the dam — which Ukrainian officials and the European Parliament blame on Russia, even though the structure was under Russian control — was one in a series of attacks on water infrastructure that have occurred during the Russia-Ukraine war.

Alongside those strikes, violence linked to water has erupted this year in other areas around the world.

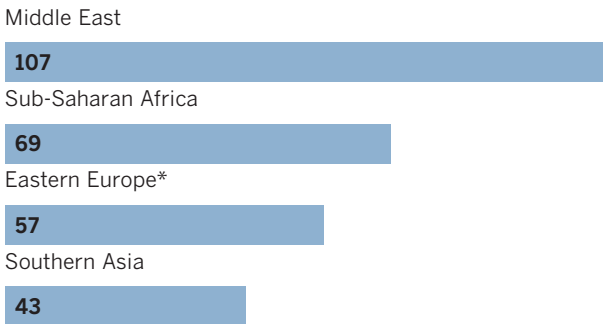
In countries including India, Kenya and Yemen, disputes over water have triggered bloodshed.

And on the Iran-Afghanistan border, a conflict centering on water from the Helmand River boiled over in deadly clashes between the two countries' forces.

These are some of the 344 instances of

These regions saw the most water-related conflicts

In 2022 and the first half of 2023, more than 340 water-related conflicts were reported globally. About 80% of them occurred in four regions.



*56 of these cases were related to the Ukraine-Russia war. Water Conflict Chronology 2023, Pacific Institute

ANA ELENA AZPÚRUA Los Angeles Times

water-related conflicts worldwide during 2022 and the first half of 2023, according to data compiled by researchers at the Pacific Institute, a global water think tank. Their newly updated data, collected through an effort called the Water Conflict Chronology, show a major upsurge in violent incidents, driven partly by the targeting of dams and water systems in Ukraine as well as an increase in water-related violence in the Middle East and other regions.

“It's very disturbing that in particular attacks on civilian water infrastructure seem to be on the rise,” said Peter Gleick, the Pacific Institute's co-founder and senior fellow. “We also see a worrying increase in violence associated with water scarcity worsened by drought, climate disruptions, growing populations, and competition for water.”

Gleick has been tracking cases of water-related conflict for more than three decades and cataloged the latest incidents with other researchers at the Oakland-based institute.

The database now [See **Water**, A10]

Turning to tribes to save wilderness

Conservation group buys Utah land, plans to name Native co-owners

By JACK HERRERA

BLUFF, Utah — In February 2020, Dave Herrero drove into the canyon country here in southeastern Utah to visit a slice of land that was up for sale — a 320-acre ranch that stretched deep into the red-rock canyon near the small town of Bluff.

“Just hop the fence and walk down the drive,” a local rock climber had told him. “You'll see some stuff.”

Herrero and his girlfriend did just that, pushing through salt brush to make their way into a rocky alcove. Amid freezing rain, it took a few seconds for his eyes to adjust.

“Oh my God!” he exclaimed.

[See **Utah**, A7]



TIM PETERSON Grand Canyon Trust

A BIRD'S-EYE view of the Cottonwood Wash in southeastern Utah and the public land that surrounds it. A conservation group bought a 320-acre ranch here.

A powerful weapon in war on superbugs

Zosurabalpin, a new antibiotic, appears to kill a drug-resistant, deadly pathogen.

By CORINNE PURTILL

Under a microscope, this drug-resistant superbug looks as benign as a handful of pebbles. Yet carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii*, or CRAB, is a nightmare for hospitals worldwide, as it kills roughly half of all patients who acquire it.

Identified as a top-priority pathogen by both the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CRAB is the most common form of a group of bacteria that are resistant to nearly all available antibiotics. Victims are typically hospitalized patients who are already sick with blood infections or pneumonia. In the U.S. alone, the bug sickens thousands and kills hundreds every year.

But 2024 is starting with some encouraging news on the global health front: For

the first time in half a century, researchers have identified a new antibiotic that appears to effectively kill *A. baumannii*.

The compound, zosurabalpin, attacks bacteria from a novel angle, disrupting the route that a key toxin takes on its journey from inside the bacterial cell to the outer membrane that shields the bug from the immune system's defensive onslaughts.

No other antibiotic approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration takes this approach, and the element of surprise is an important advantage against even microscopic foes. *A. baumannii* has had no opportunity to develop resistance against the drug, which means that, for at least a little while, zosurabalpin could ward off severe illness and death.

“As far as I can tell, the scientific approach is brilliant,” said Dr. Oladele A. Ogunseitan, a professor of population health and disease prevention at UC Irvine who was not involved with the study.

The drug was developed [See **Superbugs**, A5]

Trump appeals ban from ballot

Former president urges U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a Colorado state court's decision on his ineligibility. **NATION, A4**

UCLA to acquire old mall site

Former Westside Pavilion will become a bio-medical center tackling cancer, pandemics and more. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Hachimura lives his Ohtani dream

Lakers forward grew up playing on baseball diamonds in Japan before finding path to basketball courts. **SPORTS, B10**

Weather
Mostly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 64/42. **B6**



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