



### SMOKE RISES OVER LEBANON

Plumes of smoke from Israeli airstrikes billow over the Lebanese town of Khiam. Officials said Israeli raids may herald a ground incursion. In Shebaa, an airstrike killed nine family members. **WORLD, A3**

# Does ‘advanced recycling’ touted by Exxon even work?

Awash in plastic, California sues, calling the process a lie

By TONY BRISCOE

When California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta filed suit against Exxon Mobil and accused the oil giant of misleading the public about the effectiveness of plastic recycling, many of the allegations surrounded the company’s marketing of a process called “advanced recycling.”

In recent years — as longstanding efforts to recycle plastics have faltered — Exxon Mobil has touted advanced recycling as a groundbreaking technology that will turn the tide on the plastic crisis. Company officials and petrochemical trade organizations have used the phrase in radio spots, TV interviews and a



**A WORKER** guides containers down a chute at the Potential Industries recycling plant in Wilmington.

variety of marketing materials online. In a 2021 blogpost, Exxon Mobil’s president of product solutions, Karen McKee, painted a particularly promising picture.

“Imagine your discarded yogurt containers being transformed into medical equipment for your next doctor’s appointment, and then into the dashboard of your next fuel-efficient car.”

But despite the seemingly eco-friendly name, the attorney general’s lawsuit denounced advanced recycling as a “public relations stunt” that largely involves superheating plastics to convert them into fuel. At Exxon Mobil’s only advanced recycling facility in Baytown, Texas, only 8% of plastic is remade into new [See **Plastic**, A10]

# A new viral risk in California: Dengue

By RONG-GONG LIN II

Climate change is exacerbating the risk of potentially dangerous mosquito-borne diseases in California — threatening to turn more of those annoying-but-harmless bites into severe illnesses, experts say.

California already grapples with West Nile virus, a potentially deadly disease that was first detected in the state about two decades ago. But officials are now warning of a potential new foe: dengue, a viral infection that in the most serious cases can also lead to life-threatening complications.

Until last year, all dengue cases reported in California were associated with people traveling to a country where the disease is common. But Los Angeles County public health officials are now warning about the “unprecedented” local transmission of dengue, which is commonly found in tropical and

subtropical climates. Just in September, the county Department of Public Health reported four cases of locally acquired dengue — meaning people were infected in their communities, not while traveling. Three were documented in the San Gabriel [See **Dengue**, A10]

# Trump’s rhetorical walkabouts: Are they sheer ‘genius’ or a sign of cognitive decline?

By JAMES RAINEY AND HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS

Is he rambling? Indifferent to his audience? Exhibiting symptoms of cognitive decline? Or, instead, could former President Trump’s extended discourses demonstrate his genius — an ability, as he says, to “weave” disparate stories into a

beautiful tapestry? The 78-year-old Republican nominee’s meandering speaking style — and what it might say about his mental state — has become a new fixation in a race already upended when President Biden, 81, dropped out this summer amid questions about his own age and mental acuity.

In recent weeks, Trump

has said he would deport Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, “back to Venezuela.” He said he was being supported by “the vice president’s family” — meaning relatives of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, who is running for the office but is not vice president. He insisted — incorrectly — he had been in a helicopter crash with former San Fran-

cisco Mayor Willie Brown. Trump has repeatedly hurled critiques at former President Obama, when his real target seemed to be President Biden, misstatements he insisted were “sarcasm.” In August, the science-and-health-focused website Stat News published a detailed analysis of Trump’s [See **Trump**, A5]

# When it comes to Big Tech, Newsom has to walk tightrope

Governor vetoes a sweeping AI bill, saying he doesn’t want to hinder innovation.

By TARYN LUNA AND WENDY LEE

SAN FRANCISCO — Backstage at one of the largest artificial intelligence conferences in the world, Gov. Gavin Newsom listened to two leaders in the field debate opposite views of a high-profile bill on his desk to protect Californians from the technology. “Honestly, I take advantage of opportunities like this,” Newsom said recounting the exchange during an interview at the Salesforce conference in San Francisco in mid-September. “I just watched them, and I was like, ‘Here we go. Should I sign it, or should I not?’ Then ‘absolutely,’ ‘absolutely not’ and back and forth.”

The scene offered a peek into Newsom’s deliberations on regulating the tech industry, including an explosion of AI companies, and the forces seeking to influence him during bill-signing season at the state Capitol. The Democratic governor vetoed the AI bill a week after the conference, adding to criticism that he sides too often with Meta, Google and other power players in an industry he’s admired and been friendly with throughout his career.

As a supervisor and then mayor of San Francisco, Newsom had a front-row seat to the tech boom of the 1990s and forged political and personal ties to the titans of a California industry that funnels billions into the state economy. The guest list to his 2008 wedding in Montana included Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore and other A-list business types.

He’s also an entrepreneur at heart whose own irritation over a city regulation,



ERIC THAYER Associated Press  
“I WANT to maintain our dominance,” Gavin Newsom says of state’s vanguard role in tech.

which required him to install a mop sink in his carpeted wine shop, partially motivated his interest in government.

Now as governor, Newsom said he seeks to balance his desire to preserve California’s role as the vanguard of technology against his job to shield society from potential harm, particularly around artificial intelligence.

“The approach is that he wants to be at the forefront, that he thinks somehow regulations, even smart regulations, thwart that effort to go fast,” said Lorena Gonzalez, the leader of the California Labor Federation. “His favorite word is ‘innovation.’”

Gonzalez represents labor unions in California that are concerned artificial intelligence will replace jobs. There’s also a distrust of Silicon Valley giants that profit off content produced by other people.

Newsom described his own philosophy on governing tech to a room full of conference attendees during a talk with Salesforce Chief Executive Marc Benioff, the godfather of his oldest child.

“I want to maintain our dominance. I want to maintain our innovation,” Newsom said at Salesforce’s conference, Dreamforce. “At the same time, you feel a deep sense of responsibility to address some of those more ex-

[See **Newsom**, A7]



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

### A PAIRING FOR THE AGES

LeBron James, right, is joined by his son Bronny, a rookie with the Lakers, as he embarks on his 22nd season in the NBA. **SPORTS, B10**

### Songwriting legend dies at 88

Kris Kristofferson redefined country music with meticulous craftsmanship. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

### Weather

Mostly sunny, warm. L.A. Basin: 87/66. **B6**

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### DirecTV to buy rival Dish for \$1

The deal highlights the challenges facing traditional television. **BUSINESS, A6**

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