



# The San Diego Union-Tribune

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## FAN CLUB



Young baseball lovers sprint after Fernando Tatis Jr., seated left, Monday during the Padres' spring training at the Peoria Sports Complex in Peoria, Ariz. Monday marked the team's first full-squad workout of the season. MEG MCLAUGHLIN / U-T

## Europe hastily gathers to talk security

### Allies' exclusion from U.S., Russia meeting causes stir

By Catherine Porter & Steven Erlanger  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

PARIS — The leaders of many of Europe's biggest countries came to Paris on Monday in an effort to forge a strategy for their own security, as President Donald Trump's envoys prepared for talks with Russia over ending the war in Ukraine without them.

The meeting in Paris was pulled together hastily after the first visit to Europe last week by Vice President JD Vance and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, which left European leaders alarmed by both the tone and message of the new Trump administration and what it might hold for the continent.

European leaders were shocked by the hostility of Vance's scathing speech in Munich criticizing Europe's exclusion of far-right groups from power, and the sudden U.S. plans to begin peace talks with Russia in Saudi Arabia, starting today, without the presence of Ukrainian or European leaders.

Trump's phone call last week to Russian President Vladimir Putin broke ranks with most European allies who have tried to isolate the man who ordered the invasion of sovereign Ukraine three years ago next week.

See DIPLOMACY on Page A5

## Israel to delay troop pullout in Lebanon

### Lull in Gaza talks also jeopardizes a separate ceasefire

By Melanie Lidman & Sally Abou Aljoud  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Israel's military says its forces will remain in five strategic locations in southern Lebanon after today's deadline for their withdrawal under a ceasefire with the Hezbollah militant group, as Lebanon's government expressed frustration over another delay.

A separate ceasefire in Gaza was also in doubt as the region marked 500 days of Israel's war with Hamas, while Israel and the

United States send conflicting signals over whether they want the truce to continue. Talks on the ceasefire's second phase have yet to start.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani said the five locations in Lebanon provide vantage points or are located across from communities in northern Israel, where about 60,000 Israelis are still displaced. He said the "temporary measure" was approved by the U.S.-led body monitoring the truce, which earlier was extended by three weeks.

Under the agreement, Israeli forces should withdraw from a buffer zone in southern Lebanon that would be patrolled by the Lebanese army and U.N. peacekeepers. The ceasefire has held since taking effect in November.

Israel is committed to a withdrawal in "the right way, in a gradual way, and in a way that the security of our civilians is kept," Shoshani told reporters.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun told reporters the ceasefire "must be respected," saying, "the Israeli enemy cannot be trusted." He said Lebanese officials were working diplomatically to achieve the Israeli withdrawal, "and I will not accept that a single Israeli remains on Lebanese territory."

Hezbollah began firing rockets, drones and missiles into Israel the day after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza ignited the war there. The Israel-Hezbollah conflict boiled over into all-out war in September as Israel carried out massive waves of airstrikes and killed most of the militant

group's senior leaders.

Earlier Monday, an Israeli drone targeted a car in Lebanon's southern port city of Sidon, the deepest strike inside Lebanese territory since the ceasefire took effect. Israel said it targeted Muhammad Shaheen, the head of Hamas' operations in Lebanon. AP video there showed a charred vehicle.

"Now the fear has come back to people," said Ahmed Sleim, a Sidon resident, who worried about a return to war.

In Israel, protesters held demonstrations across the country calling for the Gaza ceasefire to be extended so that more hostages abducted in the Oct. 7 attack can be freed.

See MIDEAST on Page A5



ALEJANDRO TAMAYO / U-T

### BUSINESS

## Little Italy Food Hall closes down

After nearly seven years in one of San Diego's prime culinary hubs, the Little Italy Food Hall shut its doors for good over the weekend. Its operators decided to move away from the food hall model to focus on other restaurant ventures. A8

### LOCAL

## San Diego cracking down on 'Floatopia'

City officials sent the organizers of an illegal float party held each July on Mission Bay a \$54,000 invoice to cover the cost of lifeguard rescues and crowd control by police and park rangers. Officials say the event is chaotic and dangerous. B1



A rendering shows San Diego State University's proposal to expand student housing by adding seven high-rise buildings, which could ease crowding in nearby College Area. SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## SDSU proposes building 7 towers housing 5,220 students on campus

By Gary Robbins  
UNION-TRIBUNE

San Diego State University is pursuing the largest campus housing expansion in school history, proposing to build seven tall dorms that would accommodate 5,220 students in College Area, a neighborhood largely composed of suburban homes.

The multiphase project, which could cost upward of \$1 billion, would lift the school's housing capacity to about 13,000 students, making it among the largest residential sites in the

23-campus California State University system.

The SDSU website states that the Evolve Student Housing plan "will meet the housing for first-year students and sophomores, as well as upper-division students by increasing the number of rooms available to accommodate diverse student housing preferences and needs."

SDSU added in an email to the Union-Tribune: "Importantly, this project is not designed to drive student enrollments, but to fulfill demands for student housing. The project is a neces-

sary response to the region's housing crisis and student demand and will provide students with financially accessible and sustainable housing options."

Many students currently rent entire or part of privately owned homes in College Area, an arrangement that has caused many problems over the years. Neighbors frequently complain to San Diego police and the university about loud parties, especially those coming from

See SDSU on Page A6

## Records: S.D. spent \$8,405 on mayor's 8-day trip

### Costs in Philippines for security, city says; Gloria paid own way

By Jeff McDonald  
UNION-TRIBUNE

Taxpayers spent more than \$8,000 for two San Diego Police Department employees to accompany Mayor Todd Gloria to the Philippines this month, newly released records show.

The mayor's office said the men were part of Gloria's security detail. A third public employee also was part of the San Diego Filipino community delegation that made the trip, although that person's expenses were paid by a local nonprofit school, city officials said.

The same documents indicate that Gloria used a personal credit card to charge \$2,218 in airplane travel and wrote a check for \$1,561 to a Philippines-based tour company to pay his share of the costs for the eight-day trip.

The airline tickets were booked early last month, according to the heavily redacted statement; the personal check was dated Feb. 1, the day Gloria left San Diego on the unannounced trip.

See MAYOR on Page A6

### DIGITAL ACTIVATION

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### U-T INDEX

Business . . . . .	A8	Dear Abby . . . . .	B9	Scores . . . . .	D5
Comics . . . . .	B5	Editorial . . . . .	B3	Television . . . . .	E3
Crossword . . . . .	B9	Obituaries . . . . .	B4	Weather . . . . .	A10



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## UCSD must do better on renewable energy use

By Chloe Banaag, Zahir Hernandez & Ainsley Bock

According to a recent report by the European Union climate scientists, global temperatures in 2024 are 1.5 C warmer than pre-industrial levels, signifying the year as not only the hottest on record, but also the year that global temperatures surpassed the warning limit set by the Paris Agreement in 2015. Globally, the melting of glaciers continues to cause unprecedented sea level rise and record surface temperatures are leaving more and more parts of Earth inhospitable.

In California, we're seeing firsthand the effects of climate change, extreme droughts, increasing wildfire intensity and heat waves are becoming the new normal. These changes are a result of fossil

fuel burning and carbon dioxide accumulation in the atmosphere. Burning fossil fuels to generate electricity and hot water, UC San Diego emits over 150,000 tons of carbon dioxide every year, making it the second largest polluter in the University of California system.

The majority of UCSD's power comes from a co-generation plant, which burns methane and emits carbon dioxide to provide heating, cooling and electricity to our campus. Various student activist groups such as CALPIRG Students and Green New Deal at UCSD have been advocating for our school to set ambitious goals on the transition to clean energy. Over the last year, students have gathered thousands of petition signatures, hosted town hall events and held protests calling

for a just transition to 100% clean energy by 2035.

While emerging technologies will no doubt aid in the transition away from fossil fuels, established technologies such as heat pump plants, electric boilers, and solar photovoltaics and thermal can be used in a multi-phased approach to decarbonize the UCSD campus in the next decade. UCSD is considering a deadline of 2045 to retire its co-generation plant. It is essential that UCSD propose a more ambitious timeline for campus decarbonization since the next decade will be a critical time in our fight against the worst effects of the climate crisis.

In 1957, Roger Revelle, the founder of UCSD, hypothesized that fossil fuels would lead to environmental changes. Since then, the university has built a

legacy of global leadership in climate change science, policy and now education. The most recent example is UCSD pioneering a first-of-its-kind climate change general education requirement that makes sure that students are educated on current environmental issues related to the climate crisis.

Right now, expanding this legacy is more important than ever. In this time of national uncertainty and environmental crisis, it is crucial that UCSD listens to its students (and faculty) by making a commitment to 100% clean energy by 2035.

We have fought for this campaign for the majority of our college careers, because we believe in the fight against climate change and making a positive impact through student activism

and building community. Being engaged in the activist sphere on campus has been revolutionary for our time here, a period of our lives that will shape our future and ambitions, but also the environment we have had the honor of helping to protect.

UCSD gave us the opportunity to meet other students, faculty, and administration that believe whole-heartedly in this cause to save our planet. We hope to see our university lead in the transition to a fossil-free future and inspire other schools to follow.

*Banaag is a UCSD student majoring in social psychology. Hernandez is a UCSD student majoring in marine biology. Bock is a UCSD student majoring in business psychology. They live in La Jolla.*

## How to help kids become curious learners

By Nancy L. Sasaki & Allison Ohle

The first five years of a child's life are foundational ones, brimming with opportunities for learning, growth, and discovery. They are also some of the most physically exhausting years for caregivers, especially working parents. It can be easy to feel like "instilling a love of learning" is a little lower on the priority list than more pressing things like sleep, nutrition and safety. While classrooms and educators play critical roles in shaping young minds, parents and caregivers are uniquely positioned to lay the groundwork for helping their kids become curious learners who succeed in school and life.

Literacy is a cornerstone of education and a critical predictor of lifelong opportunities because, up to third grade, students are learning to read, and afterwards, they are reading to learn. In many neighborhoods across San Diego County, there are kids and adults struggling to read, and without early intervention, countless young learners risk falling behind, jeopardizing their academic success and future wellbeing. Parents, grandparents and other caregivers are their child's best and most important first teachers. There is no substitute for the love, connection and creativity they bring to their child's learning journey.

However, here's a secret: Instead of being one more thing on your to-do list, instilling a love of learning and reading in your child early is incredibly easy. It can even be more fun, enriching, and rewarding for both of you.

Based on our experience as parents, educators and supporters of education programs in San Diego County, here are some activities you can incorporate into your daily routine to instill a love of learning in your child early on, even before they start recognizing numbers or letters:

— Rhyme, sing or rap about



The first five years of a child's life are filled with opportunities for learning, growth and discovery, according to the authors of this essay. SCNG

what you're doing in the moment, even if it's simply cleaning up toys.

— Describe everything you see around you, but use a funny voice.

— Sing together. Songs from your childhood, songs from the radio or made-up songs!

— Share stories, then ask your child to draw a picture of the story.

— Read a book (or make up a story) at bedtime or bath time! Once they begin learning the alphabet, colors and numbers, reinforce what they're doing in preschool, pre-K, transitional kindergarten or kindergarten by playing these games:

— Name the colors of objects around you, or name an item and say the other person has to find another item that is the same color.

— While in transit, play "I spy" and look for objects beginning with certain letters of the alphabet.

— While waiting in line, ask your child what letter their name starts with, then ask them to name other things that start with that letter.

— While running errands, look for all the letters of the alphabet on signs around you, starting with the letter A, or ask your child to find the letters in their name by using signs along the street and on buildings.

— At the grocery store, ask them to help you count the number of bananas as you load them into your cart.

No matter who you are, you are uniquely positioned to be the best first teacher for your child. You

are the most important teacher for young children who love you, and you can help your children learn any time, all the time, right now.

Everyone can help children build strong reading skills — use these tips or share them with other caregivers like grandparents, neighbors and pediatricians. We also encourage you to get involved with efforts to bolster literacy in southeast San Diego schools. For example, United Way of San Diego County and Diamond Education Excellence Partnership or DEEP, have joined together, with other community partners, to 1) empower families, caregivers and our communities with tools to become reading coaches and build a habit of

reading; 2) equip educators with effective literacy tools and teacher development, so that all students can read by the third grade, and 3) provide in-depth skill building after school and during the summer for those children who need a little extra help.

Literacy is a key predictor of lifelong success for children. Parents and non-parents alike can help us build a generation of kids who love reading, enjoy learning about the world around them, and ultimately reach their future goals.

*Sasaki is president and CEO of United Way of San Diego County and lives in Clairemont. Ohle is the executive director of Diamond Education Excellence Partnership and lives in Ocean Beach.*

## The surprising role of livestock in climate concerns

By Arturo Macias Franco

Whenever we hear about climate change, it's often in the wake of a disaster such as the recent Los Angeles wildfires. Wildfires rage, floods devastate and the conversation inevitably turns to greenhouse gases and how to reduce them.

Indeed, fossil fuel combustion is constantly linked to climate change, and has been associated with the current Southern California fires. But while fossil fuels are a significant driver, other factors — like soil degradation from poor infrastructure growth and inadequate crop-agricultural practices — also intensify natural disasters, causing landslides and dust storms, among other severe consequences.

Given the urgency, many advocate for eating less meat as a solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But as a cow nutritionist focused on sustainable livestock systems, I believe the solution is not that simple. Reducing or stopping meat consumption will not yield the climate impact

some expect and assume.

Cattle often come under scrutiny for greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane from enteric fermentation. Headlines also sensationalize claims, like the supposed 1,700 gallons of water required per pound of beef. However, for livestock producers, enteric emissions — methane and carbon dioxide from fermentation generated in the stomach of cows — are more than just gases; they represent a 12% energy loss that could otherwise go into animal growth and their pockets. Reducing these emissions isn't just an environmental goal; it's an economic priority.

Here's what's actually happening: Over the past 50 years, the number of cattle has significantly decreased, but beef production and animal weights have risen. This is no accident. By breeding more feed-efficient animals and incorporating novel technologies that improve animal efficiency, in addition to feed additives and tools directly tailored to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, livestock producers have been

practicing "sustainable intensification" for decades. These advancements allow for more beef to be produced with fewer resources, lowering greenhouse gas emissions per unit of meat.

In addition to the improvements we have observed, reducing meat overlooks the ecological impact animals play in the environment. Take rotational grazing, a tool that not only supports rangeland restoration but also enhances soil health — vital for avoiding desertification and landslides. For many regions, particularly arid and semi-arid areas where farming isn't viable, livestock may be the only sustainable protein source. Forcing crop-based agriculture in these areas could further degrade soils, harming ecosystems rather than helping them.

And yes, emissions matter. But research shows that intensively managed beef production systems — whether pasture- or feedyard-based — support carbon cycling since these animals spend around two-thirds of their lives in pasture. Sustainable grazing alone could achieve up to 53% of

the targeted carbon storage under the "4 per 1,000" mitigation strategy. And for those worried about greenhouse gas emissions (such as methane), intensively finished animals (feedlots) have 73% lower carbon dioxide equivalents (how scientists measure warming potential), produce a heavier animal (over 250 lbs. heavier animal), all while reducing feed consumed (resources) as much as 60%.

Take, for example, the Great Plains (Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Colorado) and the Texas panhandle, which maintain over 72% of the cattle on feedlots. This comes as no surprise, for they are uniquely positioned to efficiently produce beef due to their proximity to key feed ingredients and infrastructure. Such systems exemplify how geography and resource optimization can support sustainable meat production, especially in feedlots. In California, which holds around 6% of the U.S. cattle population, around 10% of those animals are maintained in feedlots.

So how can consumers support this effort?

Look for sustainable certifications such as "grain-finished," or "certified sustainable" on beef labels, and research producers committed to sustainability. Many ranchers and feedlot operators are transparent about their practices, providing consumers with the information needed to make informed choices.

After all, sustainability is an essential component of livestock production since non-sustainable production puts producers out of business.

The next time you consider tackling climate change through your diet, remember that sustainability is complex. A well-raised steak isn't just food — it's part of a system that, when managed correctly, can contribute to a healthier planet. Instead of focusing on the farts, let's focus on the grass — and the vital role these animals play in conserving it.

*Macias Franco is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. He is a Public Voices Fellow of the OpEd Project.*