



**TICKER**

**Jewish centers see bomb-threat wave**

Twenty-seven Jewish community centers across 17 U.S. states reported receiving hoax bomb threats on Jan. 18, nine days after 16 Jewish facilities received similar calls. The threats prompted evacuations but no explosives were found.

**Italy hotel buried by avalanche**

A four-story spa hotel in the mountains of Abruzzo, in central Italy, was buried by snow from an avalanche apparently triggered by an earthquake. The hotel's roof partly collapsed, and at least 20 people were reported missing.

**Secret Service settles bias case**

The Secret Service agreed to pay \$24 million to settle an almost two-decade-old case brought by more than 100 black agents who alleged that the agency fostered a racist culture and rejected their promotion bids in favor of white staff. The agency did not admit to wrongdoing or institutional bias.

**Snatched newborn found after 18 years**

An 18-year-old who was snatched as a newborn from a Florida ward has been reunited with her birth parents. Gloria Williams, who abducted Kamiah Mobley in 1998, was arrested and held in a Jacksonville jail.

**NATION**

**As drought lets up, California faces new water struggles**

By Justin Worland

AFTER FIVE LONG YEARS, IT APPEARS California's drought is finally letting up. Thanks to a recent string of storms, more than a third of the state has now welcomed healthy precipitation, and California's snowpack—a crucial source of water as the year progresses—has reached nearly twice its seasonal average in some parts of the Sierra Nevada. That's a dramatic improvement over last summer, when literally every inch of the state experienced drought conditions. It's also welcome news for Californians, who have faced a series of water restrictions since Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency in early 2014. Farmers have been forced to spend heavily to maintain yields.

But the state's water struggles are far from over. For one, nobody knows for sure how long these rains will last. Although recent precipitation has been abundant—in some places more than 80 in.—the accuracy of storm forecasting remains unreliable beyond a week. Californians know this all too well: last year, experts projected a “Godzilla” El Niño that would bring record levels of precipitation. It never materialized. “Will six weeks from now be wet?” asks Jeanine Jones, California's interstate water-resources manager. “The skill in that kind

of forecasting is just not there.”

In other words, a storm slowdown is a very real possibility—and it could leave California without enough water to make it through the dry summer. Historically, when that happens, the state has turned to groundwater stored in natural rock formations deep beneath the earth's surface. But those reserves remain depleted after years of drought; restoring them could take years in some places, says Jones.

The quick influx of water has also created a delicate balancing act for water managers. Keeping surface reservoirs filled to the brim protects against the possibility of a sudden dry spell, but it also heightens the risk of flooding if and when future storms hit. To that end, water managers opened

**‘Some places will probably see very little recovery, even over the long term.’**

JEANINE JONES, California department of water resources

the Sacramento Weir floodgates earlier this month to drain reservoir water into nearby fields after projections showed local water levels would likely continue to rise. That's a calculation that will be made across the state in the coming months.

For now, though, Jones is focused on planning and ensuring the state's water supply come what may. “We're halfway through our wettest season, and conditions have been encouraging,” she says. “I would say we're cautiously optimistic.” □

**ROUNDUP**

**Female-only transport**

Air India is to reserve two rows on every flight for females only, after reports of women groped by male passengers. But similar initiatives around the world have been criticized as Band-Aids that cover up rather than address the problem of male-on-female violence. —Tara John

**TRAINS**

U.K. opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn raised the idea of female-only passenger cars in 2015 to tackle harassment. Critics said segregating women would signal defeat on the issue.

**BUSES**

In the Chinese city of Zhengzhou, the introduction of women-only buses featuring pink fluffy toys has riled feminists who said they encourage stereotyping.

**TAXIS**

Women-only cabs (below) in conservative Dubai might reduce the risks of sexual assault, but they have been criticized for reinforcing gender segregation.



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