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ON THE ROAD AGAIN

NEWSOM AGENDA IS FULL OF TRAVEL



Gov. Gavin Newsom gives an interview as he arrives to attend a security conference on Feb. 13 in Munich, Germany. The event, attended by defense ministers from around the world, was among several trips Newsom has taken this term. **MICHAELA STACHE — AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES**

Governor spending a lot of time out of state during second term, analysis shows, as he polishes national profile

By Ethan Varian
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Gov. Gavin Newsom has spent nearly one out of every five days in his second term traveling outside of California as he builds his national profile ahead of an expected presidential run, a Bay Area News Group analysis of scheduling emails sent by his office to reporters shows.

Newsom, who is term-limited early next year, has traveled more than twice as many days out of state in his second term as in his first, the analysis found.

Critics say Newsom's itinerary

reflects a governor focused more on his future political ambitions than on California's day-to-day challenges. A UC Berkeley survey last year found that 54% of California voters believe Newsom is devoting more attention to things that could benefit himself as a presidential candidate, compared with 26% who said he is paying more attention to leading the state.

"He's excellent when he really focuses on the problems facing the state," said Steven Maviglio, a longtime Democratic Sacramento political consultant. "Unfortunately, his eyes are on a bigger prize, and have been since he was reelected."



Newsom reacts after receiving a jug of moonshine at an event hosted by the South Carolina Democratic Party in Manning on Feb. 23. He also visited other communities. **SEAN RAYFORD — GETTY IMAGES**

The governor's office has defended the travel as essential to advancing California's economic and climate partnerships, saying Newsom remains in constant

contact with his team and continues to work while away.

In addition to official state busi-

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CALIFORNIA

Phone ban in schools sought

If passed, 'bell-to-bell' policy would be for all TK-12 locations

By Molly Gibbs
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A statewide ban on students using cellphones in school could come as early as next summer under newly proposed legislation that would replace a more flexible mandate signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2024.

The bipartisan bill, AB 1644, introduced last week, would require all TK-12 public schools and charter schools to adopt "bell-to-bell" policies prohibiting student smartphone use from the first bell in the morning until the final bell at the end of the day. Exceptions would be made for safety, health and educational purposes, including teacher permission.

The bill was authored by Assemblymembers Josh Hoover, a Republican representing Folsom; Al Muratsuchi, a Democrat representing Torrance; Josh Lowenthal, a Democrat representing Long Beach; and Buffy Wicks, a Democrat representing Oakland.

"Smartphones are incredible devices that can be helpful in so many ways. But they are also incredibly disruptive, distracting and addictive — and we know

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MIDDLE EAST TENSION

U.S. seizes cargo ship carrying Iranian flag

Officials say the vessel tried to skirt blockade near Strait of Hormuz

By Michelle L. Price, Samy Magdy and Sem Metz
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The United States said it attacked and seized an Iranian-flagged cargo ship that tried to get around a naval blockade near the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday, the first interception since its blockade of Iranian ports began last week.

Iran will respond soon, its state broadcaster said later, calling the armed boarding an act of piracy.

The events threw into question both the fragile ceasefire and President Donald Trump's earlier announcement that U.S. negotiators would head to Pakistan today for another round of talks with Iran. The ceasefire is set to expire by Wednesday, and Washington and Tehran's standoff over the strait has now sharpened.

Trump on social media said a U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer in the Gulf of Oman warned the ship, the *Touska*, to stop and then "stopped them right in their tracks by blowing a hole in the engine-room." U.S. Marines had custody

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COMPANIES EAGER TO COLLECT

Firms can start claiming tariff refunds

Process instituted after Supreme Court ruled Trump didn't have the power to assess them

By Mae Anderson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — A refund system for businesses that paid tariffs which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled President Donald Trump imposed without the constitutional authority to do so is scheduled to launch today.

Importers and their brokers will be able to begin claiming refunds through an online portal, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agency administering the system.

It's the first step in a compli-



A cargo ship loaded with containers docks at the Port of Oakland on Jan. 9. Companies that lost money due to President Donald Trump's tariffs can now apply for refunds. **RAY CHAVEZ — STAFF ARCHIVES**

cated process that also might eventually lead to refunds for consumers who were billed for some or all of the tariffs on

products shipped to them from outside the United States.

Companies must submit declarations listing the goods

on which they collectively put billions of dollars toward the import taxes the court subsequently struck down. If CBP approves a claim, it will take 60-90 days for a refund to be issued, the agency said.

The government expects to process refunds in phases, however, focusing first on more recent tariff payments. Any number of technical factors and procedural issues could delay an importer's application, so any reimbursements businesses plan to make to customers likely would trickled down slowly.

In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court on Feb. 20 found that Trump usurped Congress' tax-setting role last April when he set new import tax rates on

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