

NFL's global aspirations stay on track

SPORTS, 1B



VENTURA COUNTY STAR

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U.S. exits Iraq after 2 decades

Withdrawal may leave opening for Iran influence

Ahmed Rasheed
REUTERS

BAGHDAD – U.S. forces were set to pull out from their last bases in Iraq by Sept. 30, a departure celebrated as a victory by Iran and its allies who now have deep influence in the country where 4,500 Americans died during more than two decades of war. Iraqi security experts say the withdrawal – agreed in 2024 under President Joe Biden and carried out by Donald Trump’s administration even as it

wages war against Iran – could give Tehran and its powerful allies free rein, while also allowing other U.S. enemies to stage a comeback, including Islamic State. “Iran stands to benefit strategically from the coalition’s departure because it removes a military presence that for years acted as a counterweight to Tehran’s influence in Iraq,” said Jasim al-Bahadli, an Iraqi security analyst specializing in studying armed Shiite groups aligned with Iran. He predicted that the pro-Iranian mi-

litia groups would not only portray the departure as a victory for their movement, but also “seek to translate that momentum into greater influence over security and political decision-making.” Abu Mojtaba al-Yasiri, a commander in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed armed factions, described the U.S. withdrawal as “a historic victory for the Iraqi Islamic resistance groups and honorable Iraqis, and a crushing defeat for the American project.” “Iraq has proven that its sovereignty cannot be secured by foreign forces, but by the resistance and the will of its people,” he told Reuters.

While the eventual departure of U.S. forces is broadly popular among Iraqis, those who worry about the strength of the Iran-backed groups fear the withdrawal is premature. “We believe Iraq is still not fully ready to take over the security file at this time,” Abdulrahman al-Zobaie, a Sunni tribal leader in Fallujah, once a bastion of anti-American resistance, told Reuters. “All Iraqis aspire to full sovereignty, and no Iraqi would dispute that. But I believe that the [U.S.-led coalition] leaving in this way and creating a vacuum is what all Iraqis fear.”

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VENTURA COUNTY



Steve Goodall, author of the first 2026 Ventura County Nonprofit Sector Report, gives highlights of the report’s findings at the Center for Nonprofit Leadership at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks on Sept. 28. PHOTOS BY JUAN CARLO/THE STAR

Study: Area nonprofits lack ample funding

Makena Huey
Ventura County Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

Ventura County’s nonprofits are surviving but not thriving, according to a first-of-its-kind study conducted by California Lutheran University’s Center for Nonprofit Leadership. The 2026 Ventura County Nonprofit Sector Report, an assessment of the financial health of the local nonprofit ecosystem that was released during a Sept. 28 presentation at the Thousand Oaks college campus, contained both hopeful and distressing findings. The document concluded that although Ventura County is home to an abundance of nonprofits that are capable of meeting the community’s needs, the region lacks the financial investment necessary for the existing organizations to reach their potential and build resilience. “The infrastructure is here, the leadership is here and the commitment is here,” Dena Jenson, the center’s executive director, told the audience of local nonprofit leaders, donors and government officials. “The question that we have before us this morning is, ‘Are we willing to adequately invest in the nonprofit sector?’” To assess the health of the nonprofit ecosystem, the team of researchers primarily relied on the 1,100 organizations’ federal tax filings from 2019 through



From left, Janet Garufis, chairman and CEO of Montecito Bank & Trust, watches Scott Heimlich, president of the Amgen Foundation, speak during a panel discussion on the health of the region’s nonprofits. 2024. The team then focused on eight categories to create a 100-point scale, ranging from distressed to very strong. Ventura County’s nonprofit sector received 55 of 100 points in 2024, falling in the stable but uneven level. See FUNDING, Page 7A

Anthropic bets on AI reshaping economy

Echo Wang
REUTERS

Anthropic is making a massive bet that AI will transform the global economy more profoundly than industrialization, electricity and the internet, according to its IPO prospectus seen by Reuters. But the cost to get there will be staggering. Anthropic reported a net loss of \$42 billion in 2025, and plans to spend \$518 billion on cloud, computing and infrastructure obligations in coming years, according to the prospectus. The prospectus details how the company has grown sharply in the last year – while also posting wider losses. Revenue grew 12-fold in 2025 to nearly \$4.6 billion, even as the company lost more than \$8 billion on an operating basis, excluding write-downs of various liabilities mostly tied to previous fundraising, according to the documents, reported here for the first time.

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Judge blocks election conditions on grants

Luc Cohen
REUTERS

A U.S. judge blocked the Trump administration on Sept. 28 from conditioning counterterrorism funds to state and local governments on changes to election administration. The decision by Washington-based U.S. District Judge Amir Ali marks the latest defeat for President Donald Trump in his bid to increase the federal government’s authority over elections ahead of the Nov. 3 midterms, when his Republicans are fighting to retain majorities in both houses of Congress. Earlier this year, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it would withhold 20% of funding under grant programs related to preparing for terrorist attacks and other threats until state or local governments adopted election administration measures

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