

POSEY TIPS  
BALANCE

Impressed by Giants exec, shortstop Adames signs on.

SPORTING GREEN, B1



SAFEWAY CLOSURE  
TO SPARE LAYOFFS

Fillmore supermarket plans to shutter in February; 122 workers will be reassigned.

BAY AREA & BUSINESS, A2



ROM-COM  
DELIGHT

'Miss Bennet' offers spicy debate with holiday cheer.

DATEBOOK, B7

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## Agencies sprinting to rescue refugees



Photos by Andri Tambunan/Special to the Chronicle

A nine-member Afghan family, admitted to the U.S. under a Special Immigrant Visa, prepares to leave Sacramento International Airport and start anew one month before President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

### Resettlement groups plead with Biden administration to fast-track admissions before Trump takes office

By Raheem Hosseini

Two Afghan families float down parallel escalators into the unbusy baggage claim area of Sacramento International Airport, greeted by Christmas jingles from the speakers and a small welcoming party underneath the airport's 10,000-pound rabbit sculpture.

INSIDE

Visa policy could divide Trump, Musk. A5

The fathers and husbands wear their prized visas — a full-page government document — in clear plastic sleeves clipped to lanyards around their necks. Their wives and children wear searching, dazed expressions.

Two caseworkers from Opening Doors Inc., a local nonprofit that works with refugees and immigrants, do something they want to do more of in coming weeks. They usher the

Refugees continues on A11



Relatives hug at the airport, where the resettlement nonprofit Opening Doors welcomed two families from Afghanistan.

"We are expecting as of Jan. 20 a potential and entire dismantling of the refugee admissions program. We do know that the numbers will plummet."

Tara Winter, International Rescue Committee's Northern California office

## Warnings as SFPD overtime skyrockets

Audit cites a lack of oversight, potential abuse by officers

By Michael Barba

A newly released audit on the San Francisco Police Department's massive overtime budget has found that some officers are working dangerously high amounts of overtime — and potentially abusing sick leave to do so.

The audit, released Thursday by the city's Budget and Legislative Analyst at the request of Supervisor Dean Preston, examined the SFPD's overtime spending over a five-year period ending in fiscal year 2022-23. That spending more than doubled from \$52.9 million in the first year examined by auditors to \$108.4 million in the final year of the review, according to the audit.

Among the findings were that the department did not stop officers from regularly blowing through the maximum amounts of overtime they were supposed to work and did not hold them accountable for doing so.

The audit found that a small number of officers — 209, or 12% of the cops who worked overtime — were responsible for nearly a third of all SFPD overtime spending in the last year of the review.

"Excessive overtime hours pose risks to public safety and officer health, may contribute to employee burnout and negatively affect morale, and may generate unnecessary financial costs for the

Overtime continues on A12

## Major insurer will write more policies in state

By Megan Fan Muncie

Farmers Insurance Group, the second largest home insurer in California, plans to begin writing more homeowners policies in anticipation of reforms coming in 2025.

In July 2023, Farmers capped the number of new residential insurance policies it would write at 7,000 a month. Now, it will increase that cap to 9,500 new customers per month, including home, condo owner and home renters policies. This will be the first time since April 2023 that Farmers has accepted new applications for condo and home renters insurance policies, a spokesperson told the Chronicle.

Last year, a Farmers spokesperson told the Chronicle the cap was necessary due to "record-breaking inflation, severe weather events, and reconstruction costs continuing to climb." But in a Wednesday release, Behram Dinshaw, Farmers Insurance's president of personal lines, said the com-

Insurer continues on A12

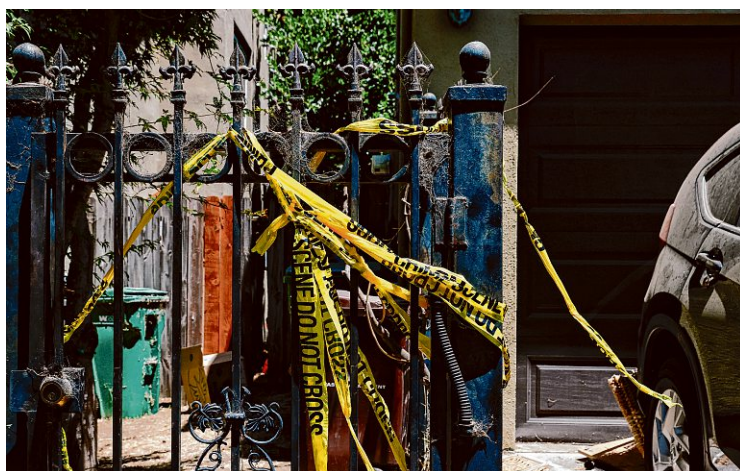
## Man in FBI probe paid Thao's boyfriend

By Rachel Swan

An Oakland businessman charged in connection with his effort to help Sheng Thao win Oakland's mayoral race two years ago wrote two checks totaling \$7,500 to Thao's longtime romantic partner "immediately after the election," Alameda County prosecutors said in a new court filing.

Prosecutors did not say why the businessman and former City Council candidate, Mario Juarez, would make payments to Andre Jones, who lives with Thao.

But they said it appeared Juarez was "essentially a conduit" for two contractors — Cal Waste Solutions, which runs the city's curbside recycling, and ABC Security Service, which protects government buildings, including City Hall — that wanted to influ-



Jessica Christian/The Chronicle

The home of Oakland businessman Mario Juarez, who has been charged with check fraud, was the site of a shooting in June.

ence Thao, and who paid Juarez \$295,000 in the weeks before and after the 2022 election.

Monday's court filing sought to defend the legitimacy of the case against Juarez, who in January

was charged with check fraud tied to \$53,000 he spent on attack ads against Thao's rivals during the mayoral campaign.

Juarez wants the case tossed, accusing former District Attorney Pamela Price — who like Thao was voted out of office in November — of filing the charge in retaliation for Juarez refusing to donate to her anti-recall campaign. Price denies the claim.

The new allegation arrives in the shadow of a federal corruption investigation targeting Oakland City Hall. In June, with no public explanation, FBI agents raided the home of Thao and Jones, seizing both of their phones, while also searching Cal Waste Solutions' office and the homes of two of its leaders.

A federal grand jury subpoena Oakland continues on A12

