

**Foggy through the afternoon**  
Highs in low 80s inland  
C10

**Friday**  
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# VENTURA COUNTY STAR

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Val Kilmer stars in "Spartan," an unpredictable four-star thriller. **E1**

Greenspan says U.S. job growth will accelerate "before long." **D1**



Mission San Buenaventura is a study in state history. **B4**

Washington ousts UCLA from Pac-10 tournament, 91-83. **C1**



## Gay marriages are halted

State Supreme Court bans San Francisco's licensing of same-sex unions

**By David Kravets**  
AP legal affairs writer

SAN FRANCISCO — The California Supreme Court ordered an immediate halt to same-sex weddings in San Francisco on Thursday and said it would hear arguments in May or June on whether Mayor Gavin Newsom had the authority to allow such marriages. Teary-eyed couples were turned away at City Hall, where 4,161 gay couples have been wed

since Feb. 12. One of the first couples to be denied a license were Art Adams and Devin Baker from suburban Mountain View. "We were filling out the application and they told us to stop," said Adams, who has been with Baker for more than three years. "It's heartbreaking. I don't understand why two people in love should be prevented from expressing it." The action by California's highest

court came two weeks after state Attorney General Bill Lockyer and two conservative groups asked the seven justices to immediately block the gay marriages. The dispute began when Newsom ordered his administration to issue same-sex marriage licenses. A steady stream of gays and lesbians from two dozen states has traveled to be married at City Hall, just a block from where the Supreme Court sits.

Newsom's defiance of California law prompted a host of other municipalities across the nation to follow suit. President Bush last month cited the San Francisco weddings when he announced that he supports changing the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriages. "They restored order to chaos in San Francisco," said Joshua Carden, an



**Ben Margot / AP**  
Jeanne Rizzo, right, embraces her partner, Pali Cooper, after they learned they were about 10 minutes too late to be married in San Francisco on Thursday.

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"March 11 now has its place in the history of infamy."

Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar

## Blasts kill about 200 on 4 trains in Madrid

Basque group blamed at first, but al-Qaida tie is investigated

**By Elaine Sciolino**  
New York Times News Service

MADRID, Spain — Ten bombs ripped through four commuter trains in Madrid on Thursday, killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400 in the deadliest terrorist attack on a European target since World War II.

Spanish authorities initially blamed the Basque separatist group ETA. But after finding a van with detonators and tape of Quranic verses near Madrid, they held open the possibility of militant Islamic terrorism.

A group claiming links to al-Qaida took responsibility in a letter delivered to an Arab newspaper. An American counterterrorism official said the claim should be viewed skeptically.

Spain, a U.S. ally in the war on Iraq that has 1,300 troops stationed there, was explicitly threatened as a target in an audiotape reportedly made by Osama bin Laden last October.

As the country struggled to absorb the devastation three days before general elections, Prime Minister Jose

See **BOMBS** on **A8**

## Conflicting clues make it difficult to identify culprit

**By Don Van Natta and Tim Golden**  
New York Times News Service

The flood of conflicting evidence and clues that emerged from the carnage of the Madrid, Spain, bombings on Thursday pointed in two very different directions, leaving counterterrorism officials in a country painfully familiar with terrorist violence struggling to identify a culprit.

Just hours after the bombings, which killed at least 192 people during the morning rush hour in three commuter railway stations, the Spanish authorities blamed the attacks squarely on the Basque separatist group known as ETA. Hours later, the same officials announced the discovery of new evidence that they said left open the possibility that Islamic fundamentalists had been involved.

"Could it have been Islamic fundamentalists?" one senior Spanish anti-terrorism official asked on Thursday night. "It could have been. Spain is clearly a target of al-Qaida. Osama bin Laden has said so himself."

The scale of the violence, the indiscriminate nature of the killing and the near-simultaneity of the 10 bombings on Thursday were all reminiscent of al-Qaida. In addition, the Spanish interior minister said that the police had found detonators and an audiotape of Quranic verses in-

See **INVESTIGATION** on **A8**



**Paul White / AP**

Firefighters carry dead commuters from a shattered Madrid train after 10 bombs exploded minutes apart Thursday on four trains, killing nearly 200 people and injuring more than 1,400.



**Peter Dejong / AP**

Workers add to a line of shrouded bodies at the Atocha train station in Madrid, one of three places where terrorist explosions went off in trains during rush hour Thursday. It was Spain's worst terrorist attack, and the deadliest in Europe since World War II.

## Judge to decide on safety spending

Sheriff, DA, county will avoid long trial

**By Charles Levin**  
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Sheriff Bob Brooks and District Attorney Greg Totten agreed Thursday to put on hold certain aspects of their lawsuit over public safety funding so a judge can rule on core issues in the case and possibly save taxpayers thousands of dollars in legal costs.

Brooks and Totten agreed to delay the part of their lawsuit that alleges the county illegally diverted about \$50 million of tax money allocated for public safety to the county's general fund instead.

Attorneys for both sides also agreed to drop pretrial discovery requests that could have driven the cost of the legal battle to more than \$1 million. Many of those requests involve documents related to the diversion issue.

The agreement allows Superior Court Judge Henry Walsh to focus on the constitutionality of two key provisions of Ventura County's public safety funding law, Ordinance 4088. Brooks

See **PUBLIC SAFETY** on **A9**

## Appeals court rules against Oaks Christian bond proposal

**By John Scheibe**  
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One of Ventura County's largest private schools stands to lose \$15 million in tax-exempt financing because a state appellate court ruled this week that granting it would violate a California constitutional ban on public support of religious institutions.

Oaks Christian School in Westlake Village was hoping to use tax-exempt bonds to pay for a planned expansion and to retire some existing debt. Such financing is a common tool used by public schools and other government agencies to save on interest expenses.

The 3rd District Court of Appeal in Sacramento, however, ruled 2-1 on Tuesday that although no public funds would be spent directly on private schools, the financing would result in lost tax revenue and amount to "a form of aid" prohibited by the state constitution.

The decision is a setback "for every religious school throughout the state,"

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**Today's Star**

SPORTS: NHL's Bertuzzi suspended for rest of season, at least. **C1** | LOCAL: Luster attorney accused of encouraging client to flee. **B2**

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