

News in brief

Canada sends armored vehicles to Haiti to fight gang violence

Canada delivered armored vehicles to Haiti on



Wednesday to help combat criminal gangs as the Caribbean nation faces a humanitarian crisis, the Canadian foreign ministry said.

Canadian military aircraft made the delivery to the Haitian National Police in the capital Port-au-Prince, it added. Haitian gangs have seized control of much of the country since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, leading to routine gun battles with police.

Embattled U.S. Representative George Santos

Embattled George Santos defies New York Republicans' call to step down



Santos said he had no plans to heed fellow New York Republicans' calls to step down, a plea they made on Wednesday due to what they called "lie after lie after lie" about his career and history. Top House of Representatives Republican Kevin McCarthy said he had no intention of pressuring Santos, part of his narrow 222-212 majority, despite the public plea by more than a dozen top Republicans, many of them from Santos' suburban New York City district.

Illinois bans semiautomatic gun sales, legal challenge expected

Illinois has banned the sale of many common kinds of semiautomatic

guns with immediate effect in response to a massacre at an Independence Day parade in Highland Park last year and other mass shootings. The new law, which Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed on Tuesday evening, bans selling many kinds of weapons that automatically load the next bullet after a shot, including semiautomatic rifles and pistols with detachable magazines. The law lists dozens of popular gun brands made by US gun makers. Rifles that hold more than 10 bullets and pistols that hold more than 15 are also banned, as are rapid-fire attachments and .50-caliber guns. People who already own such weapons will be able to keep them but must register them with state police.

The US Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed New York to enforce a

Supreme Court lets New York enforce new gun restrictions



Democratic-backed gun control law adopted after the justices last year struck down the state's limits on carrying concealed handguns outside the home in a landmark ruling that expanded gun rights. The justices rejected a request by six members of the firearms rights group Gun Owners of America to throw out a lower court's decision allowing the law to be enforced. U.S. District Judge Glenn Suddaby in October blocked enforcement of much of the law but the Manhattan-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in December put that decision on hold while the state pursues an appeal.

Second set of classified papers found at Biden's home, White House says

Reuters | Washington

President Joe Biden's legal team has discovered a second set of classified documents from his time as vice president at a storage space in the garage of his home in Wilmington, Delaware, the White House said yesterday.

The statement by Richard Sauber, a special counsel to Biden, came days after the White House said an earlier batch of documents had been discovered in an office at a University of Pennsylvania think tank that Biden had used after leaving the vice presidency.

The discoveries have presented legal and political headaches for Biden as he prepares for an



President Joe Biden talks with reporters before he and first lady Jill Biden board Marine One

expected 2024 re-election campaign in the upcoming months.

A single document was found in a room adjacent to the garage in Wilmington and no documents were found in the Bidens' Rehoboth Beach home, Sauber said in a statement. The administration is "fully cooperating" to ensure that the records are handled properly, Sauber said.

There are differences between the revelation that Biden's legal team found classified documents in his properties and the ongoing Justice Department investigation into former President Donald Trump's refusal to hand over classified documents taken from the

White House.

Trump kept thousands of government records, a few hundred of which were marked as classified, inside his personal residence in Florida for more than a year after departing the White House, and did not return them immediately or willingly despite numerous requests by the National Archives.

When he finally handed over 15 boxes of records in January 2022, the Archives discovered more than 100 were marked as classified. It referred the matter to the Justice Department in the spring and a special counsel has been named to oversee the investigation.

YOU KNOW WHAT

The discoveries have presented legal and political headaches for Biden as he prepares for an expected 2024 re-election campaign in the upcoming months

Ukraine

Ukraine says troops h

Moscow has not claimed victory

Moscow puts chief of general staff in direct command of invasion

Reuters | Kyiv

Ukraine said yesterday its troops were holding out despite heavy fighting on a battlefield littered with bodies in a salt mining town in eastern Ukraine, where Russian mercenaries have claimed Moscow's first significant gain in half a year.

The ultra-nationalist contract militia Wagner, run by an ally of President Vladimir Putin outside the main chain of military command, claims to have taken Soledar after intense fighting that it said had left the town strewn with Ukrainian dead. But Moscow has held off officially proclaiming victory.

"At the moment, there are still some small pockets of resistance in Soledar," Andrei Bayevsky, a Russian-installed local politician,

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Robbers pull off multimillion-dollar copper heist in Chilean port



A panoramic view of the San Antonio port, Chile
Reuters | Santiago

Chilean authorities said on Wednesday they were investigating a violent heist in Chile's main seaport where thieves stole several shipping containers filled with copper belonging to state-owned giant Codelco.

Juan Carlos Catalan, the local prosecutor, said in a statement that ten armed men entered the San Antonio port early on Tuesday morning, attacked workers and stole 13 containers, 12 of which had copper.

"There was one guard and four workers that (the assailants) tied up and beat and left locked up," Catalan said, adding that workers alerted authorities after they freed themselves.

Catalan said authorities are investigating and reviewing security footage but have not detained any suspects.

YOU KNOW WHAT

The violent robbery adds pressure over shipment security in the world's largest copper producer. Mining companies in Chile have repeatedly complained about copper thefts by specialized gangs

In a statement to Reuters, Codelco said the copper was scheduled to be exported and was insured. Citing police sources, local media reported the copper plates were worth an estimated \$4.4 million.

US first lady Jill Biden has surgery to remove cancerous skin lesions

Reuters | Washington

US first lady Jill Biden had cancerous skin lesions removed from her face and chest during surgery on Wednesday, and a third lesion was removed from her left eyelid and sent for examination, the White House physician said.

The 71-year-old first lady, accompanied by President Joe Biden, spent more than eight hours at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for the outpatient procedure.

All cancerous tissue was removed, the White House physician said.

The president returned to the White House later on Wednesday afternoon. The first lady re-



Jill Biden walks before boarding the Marine One helicopter to travel to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

turned separately, her spokesperson, Vanessa Valdivia, said, and was "doing well and in good

spirits."

Jill Biden went to the hospital for removal of a skin lesion above her right eye. White House physician Kevin O'Connor said in a statement that the procedure "confirmed that the small lesion was basal cell carcinoma."

"All cancerous tissue was successfully removed, and the margins were clear of any residual skin cancer cells. We will monitor the area closely as it heals, but do not anticipate any more procedures will be needed," he said.

In addition, a small lesion was discovered on Jill Biden's left eyelid and it was fully excised and sent for further examination, O'Connor said.

California is deluged by record rain with more storms coming

Reuters | Mendocino

The seventh consecutive atmospheric river since Christmas dumped more rain on Northern California on Wednesday, offering little relief for a state already battered by floods, gale force winds, power outages and evacuations of entire towns.

While Wednesday's deluge was relatively minor, with less rainfall and mostly contained to northwestern California, another atmospheric river was expected to drench most of the state this weekend, said Zack Taylor, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

The parade of storms is forecast to continue, bringing even more heavy rain next week, the



View of flooding from the rainstorm-swollen Sacramento and American Rivers, near downtown Sacramento

weather service said.

That will add to record-breaking rainfall.

Downtown San Francisco recorded a phenomenal 13.6 inches (34.5 cm) of rain from Dec. 26 until Wednesday

morning, while San Francisco International Airport, the city of Oakland and the city of Stockton all recorded 16-day records over the same period, the National Weather Service said.

Prince Harry hits reports of Afghan



A staff member arranges Britain's Prince Harry's memoirs at Waterstones bookstore, in London

Reuters | London

Britain's Prince Harry has hit back at "hurtful" responses to his record-selling memoir, saying he was particularly upset by the "lie" he had boasted that he had killed 25 people in Afghanistan when serving as a military helicopter pilot.

In his book "Spare", King Charles's younger son recounts his two tours of Afghanistan, first as a forward air controller in 2007/08 and again in 2012, when he was a co-pilot gunner in Apache attack helicopters, and the number of people he had killed.

British newspapers, heavily criticized in the book, and some senior former British military figures have attacked his decision to make public the figure of those he had killed, saying it could put him and others at risk of reprisals.

Speaking to U.S. chat show host Stephen Colbert on "The Late Show", he said the press had spun his words to take his disclosure out of context, and that he had included the material to reduce the number of suicides by military