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## 'TIERED RESPONSE'

# U.S. begins striking Mideast militias

### Retaliation over killings of 3 soldiers in Jordan opens against 85 targets within Iraq and Syria

By Tara Copp, Lolita C. Baldor and Abdulrahman Zeyad  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » The U.S. military launched an air assault on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria used by Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Friday, in the opening salvo of re-

taliation for the drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan last weekend.

President Joe Biden said in a statement: "The United States does not seek conflict in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world. But let all those who might seek to do us harm know this: If you harm an American, we will

respond."

Biden and other top U.S. leaders had been warning for days that America would strike back at the militias, and they made it clear it wouldn't be just one hit but a "tiered response" over time. Biden made that point again in his statement, saying: "Our response began today. It will continue at times and places of our choosing."

The massive barrage of strikes

STRIKES » PAGE 9



President Joe Biden greets service members after arriving at Dover Air Force Base, Del., on Friday for the arrival of three killed in Jordan.

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## RIVERSIDE COUNTY

# VOTING SYSTEM IS TESTED



PHOTOS BY ANJALI SHARIF-PAUL — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Voter Ed Luna of Meca takes part in the "logic and accuracy testing" walk-through and simulation conducted by the County of Riverside's Registrar of Voters on Friday.

**Election:** Officials, media and observers gather to check machines and processes

By Jeff Horseman  
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A month out from Election Day, a closely watched team of workers put Riverside County's voting system through its paces Friday.

Election officials, news media representatives and other interested observers gathered in a glass-walled room at the Registrar of Voters headquarters in Riverside for a state-mandated "logic and accuracy" test of the machines and processes that will be used in the county for California's March 5 primary.

The test, which was open to the public, gave officials the chance to explain how votes are handled and counted and the safeguards and procedures used to ensure the true will of the people is reflected at the ballot box.

"These tests ... are designed to evaluate the performance of our voting system and it does assure

TEST » PAGE 9



Elections Analyst Vanessa Rodriguez gathers mock ballots to be scanned through the County of Riverside's Ballot Scanner machine during the demonstration of the "logic and accuracy testing" walk-through on Friday.

## ELECTION 2024

# Biden to arrive for weekend L.A. visit

President is expected to meet Black leaders in entertainment this afternoon, but skip Grammys

By Clara Harter  
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President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden will be flying into LAX for a brief Los Angeles visit today.

During their short trip, the president will be meeting with Black leaders in the entertainment industry to talk about the role they can play in the upcoming election, Deadline reported Friday.

The Bidens will not be staying for the Grammy Awards, scheduled Sunday at Crypto.com Arena, but will be departing on Sunday evening for a reelection campaign stop in Las Vegas — an important battleground state in November.

The president doesn't currently have any major fundraising events on the books, but may meet privately with donors. The wallets and public cachet of Hollywood celebrities and executives have provided important support for Biden's past campaigns.

In early December, the Bidens went on a three-day fundraising and handshaking blitz across Los Angeles.

During the whirlwind trip, they spoke at six private fundraising events, attended a mourning event for late TV producer Norman Lear and — according to the Hollywood Reporter — raised

BIDEN » PAGE 8

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY

# Prosecutor union sues Gascón to get records

By Jason Henry  
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The union representing Los Angeles County prosecutors is suing District Attorney George Gascón, alleging his office has refused to turn over public records related to controversial hires and the removal of inmates from death row.

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday, asks a judge to force the District Attorney's Office to comply with six public records requests made by the Association of Deputy District Attorneys since March 2021. The complaint states Gascón's office either hasn't responded or has cited exemptions that the union believes are "im-

LAWSUIT » PAGE 8

## POMONA

# After \$35M verdict, 4 other sex abuse lawsuits against '90s coaches await trial

By Emily Holshouser  
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In the early 1990s, rumors traveled through the halls of Pomona High School that a group of coaches were plying young cheerleaders and track stars with weed and alcohol in their offices, and sexually abusing them on and off campus. The coaches drove them around in their cars, took them to parties and treated them like

girlfriends.

Those are the accusations of eight Southern California women who filed lawsuits against the Pomona Unified School District and those coaches over the past three years. Last week, for the first time, a jury ruled that one of the women deserves \$35 million.

What the eight women say happened back then is slowly unfolding in court. To protect their privacy, all but one of the women

are identified in court records as "Jane Doe."

The women are mostly in their 40s now. They graduated high school more than two decades ago. Jane Doe No. 4 — who was awarded the \$35 million — dropped out of high school before graduation, returning more than a decade later to get her GED diploma.

Some of the women now have children who are in high school

themselves. According to her attorney, Jane Doe No. 4's daughter has expressed interest in track and field, giving her mother tremendous anxiety.

Four more women are still awaiting the resolution of their cases. Three others have quietly settled.

The lengthy lawsuits filed for each of the then-students allege that a group of coaches committed rampant sexual abuse at

the school in the mid-1990s. The coaches were young men, mostly in their 20s and 30s.

The suits are the result of Assembly Bill 218, which passed in 2019 and provided a three-year window for anyone alleging they were a victim of sexual abuse to file civil lawsuits and claim damages. The Archdiocese of San Francisco filed for bankruptcy after several hundred lawsuits were

COURTS » PAGE 9

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# START YOUR DAY HERE

**Cool fact:** The insect with the longest life span? A queen termite is known to live 50 years.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### 1913

The 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing for a federal income tax, was ratified.

### 1959

Rock-and-roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson died in a plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa.

### 1988

The U.S. House of Representatives handed President Ronald Reagan a major defeat, rejecting his request for \$36.2 million in new aid to the Nicaraguan Contras.

### 1995

The space shuttle Discovery blasted off with a woman, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Eileen Collins, in the pilot's seat for the first time in NASA history.

## Star report

### Country star Rucker posts bond following drug arrest

Country star Darius Rucker was arrested Thursday on minor drug charges in his home state of Tennessee, according to a new report.



Rucker

Per TMZ, Rucker was charged with three misdemeanors for "an alleged handoff" after he was taken into custody by the Williamson County Sheriff's Department around noon local time.

He was charged with two counts of simple possession/casual exchange of a controlled substance, and one count of a violation of the state's vehicle registration law. The latter charge was allegedly related to expired tags. Authorities did not say what drug Rucker had.

Rucker posted bond and was released about an hour later, the outlet reported. His bond was reportedly set at \$10,500.

"Darius Rucker is fully cooperating with authorities related to misdemeanor charges," the singer's attorney, Mark Puryear, told TMZ.

### Anthony Anderson lands in ER after failed stunt

Anthony Anderson fought a chair and lost.

The actor got hurt on the set of his upcoming film "G20" in Cape Town, South Africa, and detailed the incident in a post on Instagram on Thursday.

"I spent the night in the emergency room," he wrote alongside a photo of himself on a stretcher. "Movie set fight gone wrong. Me

## Hot shot



ANJALI SHARIF-PAUL — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Sidewalk strolling:** A man strolls through a Riverside neighborhood after morning showers on Thursday. On Saturday, partly cloudy skies in the morning will give way to cloudy skies during the afternoon.

against two goons and a chair! Guess who didn't win!"



Anderson

He added that while he was receiving some medical care, he managed to escape the scene without any broken bones.

"Who needs a stuntman? Me that's who! I'm not as young as I used to be!" he wrote. "CT scan and X-rays showed nothing fractured or broken in my back just a deep contusion. That chair

will never be the same though! Bloodied and bowed but never broken!"

### Waterston to leave 'Law & Order' after 400 episodes

Sam Waterston, who has played the spiky, no-nonsense district attorney on "Law & Order" since the mid-1990s, is stepping down from his legal perch.

The last episode for Waterston's Jack McCoy will be Feb. 22, NBC said Friday. He has been in more than 400 episodes of the police drama, earning a SAG Award and Emmy and Golden Globe nomina-

tions for the role.

Tony Goldwyn, who starred in "Scandal" and the 1990 film "Ghost," has been cast as the new district attorney.

Waterston, 83, joined "Law & Order" in Season 4 in 1994 and stayed until the show stopped in 2010, returning for the reboot in 2022. He began his career as a stage actor in New York with a number of Shakespeare roles, including Lear, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, Prospero, Leonato, Prince Hal, Silvius, Cloten and Benedict.

— From wire reports

## Birthdays

Football Hall of Famer Fran Tarkenton is 83.  
Football Hall of Famer Bob Griese is 79.  
Singer-guitarist Dave Davies is 77.  
Actor Morgan Fairchild is 74.  
Actor Pamela Franklin is 74.  
Actor Nathan Lane is 68.

Rock musician/author Lol Tolhurst is 65.  
Country singer Matraca Berg is 60.  
Actor Maura Tierney is 59.  
Actor Warwick Davis is 54.  
Actor Elisa Donovan is 53.  
Reggaeton singer Daddy Yankee is 48.

Actor Isla Fisher is 48.  
Human rights activist Amal Clooney is 46.  
Singer-songwriter Jessica Harp is 42.  
Actor Matthew Moy is 40.  
Rapper Sean Kingston is 34.  
Actor Brandon Micheal Hall is 31.



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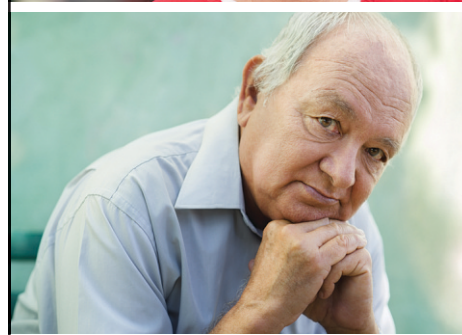


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## VICTORVILLE

## 3 more enter pleas in multiple deaths

Suspects accused of killing 6 people in drug deal gone wrong in isolated high desert area

By Brian Rokos  
brokos@scng.com

Three defendants who had not been arraigned in the slayings and robbery of six people during what authorities say was a marijuana deal in the San Bernardino County desert all entered pleas Thursday.

Jose Nicolas Hernandez-Sarabia, Jose Gregorio Hernandez-Sarabia and Jose Manuel Burgos Parra pleaded not guilty to six counts each of murder and robbery in Superior Court in Victor-

ville.

They are represented by court-appointed attorneys.

On Tuesday, Toniell Baez-Duarte and Mateo Baez-Duarte pleaded not guilty to the same charges. They also are represented by court-appointed attorneys.

The suspects are accused of gunning down six people in a remote area near the community of El Mirage about 20 miles northwest of Victorville on Jan. 23. They are due back in court Tuesday.

They are accused of killing Baldemar Mondragon-Albarran of Adelanto; Franklin Noel Bonilla and Kevin Dariel Bonilla, both of Hesperia; a man whose identity officials were withholding until his family could be notified; and two others not yet officially identified by authorities.

Four of the bodies were set ablaze, the Sheriff's Department said.

Sheriff Shannon Dicus said tips from the community helped investigators develop strong leads that led to the identification of suspects through unspecified "human and technological" means.

PLEA » PAGE 5



Bullet holes are seen in a vehicle as investigators scrutinize a scene where six bodies were discovered off Highway 395 in El Mirage on Jan. 23.

WILL LESTER  
STAFF  
PHOTOGRAPHER

## RIVERSIDE

## Exhibit explores social justice through the arts



PHOTOS BY TERRY PIERSON — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

David Dean Cruz models a red heart dress at the "Body of Freedom" exhibit in Riverside on Thursday.

## 'Body of Freedom' opens with performances, a fashion show and poetry readings

By Sarah Hofmann  
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Community arts projects exploring social justice and equity are part of a new exhibit that opened Thursday evening in downtown Riverside.

The "Body of Freedom" exhibit can be seen until mid-March at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties in Riverside.

Through the fall, community members and high school and college students took part in free art workshops that culminated with a mural at Riverside's Ramona High School and "Body of Freedom" at the center. Performances, a fashion show, poetry readings and art on display marked the exhibit's opening.

The project is a collaboration between the center, the Riverside Community College District, the Arts Magnet Program at Ramona High, Division 9 Gallery and the Inlandia Institute. It's partially funded by the California Arts Council.



Freedom Dance performs to the Beatles' "Blackbird" at the exhibit at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties in Riverside on Thursday.

## IF YOU GO

**What:** "Body of Freedom" exhibit  
**When:** Through March 16

**Where:** The Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties, 3855 Market St., Riverside  
**Information:** rccd.edu (search "Body of Freedom")

## SAN BERNARDINO

## Change of post office name a step closer

House passes bill to honor educator Hill; it is now with the Senate

By Beau Yarbrough  
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The plan to rename a San Bernardino post office after the late educator Margaret Hill got one step closer this week.

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed HR 1060, which was introduced by Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino. If approved by the Senate and signed by President Joe Biden, it would rename the U.S. Post office at 1663 E. Date Place in San Bernardino after Hill.

Hill, a Black leader in the San Bernardino community and a longtime San Bernardino City Unified school board member, died in December 2021. Hill worked as a teacher, an assistant principal and a principal in San Bernardino City Unified schools from 1971 through 2003. She also wrote a column that appeared regularly in The Sun newspaper.

"Dr. Hill left such an incredible impact on our community, and so many of our residents have had their lives changed for the better because of her compassion, dedication and grace," Aguilar said in a news release issued by his office. "The Senate acted swiftly on my Wounded Warriors Access Act last year, which was signed into law in November. I will continue advocating for this bill until it receives the president's signature."

In a congressional session on track to be one of the least productive in American history, Aguilar was one of only three Inland Empire lawmakers to get legislation passed in 2023. HR 1226 requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide an online tool to make requests related to VA claims, records or benefits.

This is Aguilar's second attempt to get the post office renamed after Hill. He previously introduced HR 6661 in February 2022, the previous session of Congress, but it was never voted on.

## LAKE ELSINORE

## City treasurer, ex-Councilmember Baldwin dies at 83

He was also the first executive director of an Orange County affordable housing nonprofit group

By Jeff Horseman  
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Lake Elsinore City Treasurer Allen Baldwin, who served as a city councilmember and became the first executive director of an Orange County affordable housing nonprofit group, has died.

Allen, 83, died Jan. 19 "peacefully" and "surrounded by fam-

ily, love and laughter," according to a family message that was part of a larger post on Facebook.

"Allen was a friend and mentor," Lake Elsinore Mayor Steve Manos wrote on Instagram. "Always in an upbeat mood, he was very wise and has been a great leader in this community in many ways for many years."

An elected position, the treasurer monitors city finances and advises city officials on fiscal matters. Baldwin had served in the role since 2009 after a stint from 1978 to 1982 on the Lake Elsinore City Council.

Also in 1978, Baldwin became the first executive director of the Orange County Community Housing Corp., which helps working-class families find affordable housing.

"Allen played a pivotal role in our organization's mission



Baldwin

to create affordable housing and uplift the lives of the less fortunate," read a corporation statement posted on Baldwin's Facebook page.

"Allen was not only a dedicated leader, but also a compassionate advocate for those in need. His tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on our organization, and

his legacy will continue to inspire us."

A Navy veteran, Baldwin was married for 57 years to Linda Sue "Holly" Baldwin. He had four children, 10 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren, according to his family's statement.

The council is working with the city attorney on the next steps in finding a new treasurer, Lake Elsinore Community Support Manager Adam Gufarotti said via email.