

A fentanyl threat from the north emerges

Canadian influx could snarl U.S. enforcement and worsen opioid crisis

BY DAVID OVALLE AND NICK MIROFF

At a rural property an hour outside Vancouver in October, Canadian police found 2.5 million doses of fentanyl and 528 gallons of chemicals in a shipping container and a storage unit. Six months earlier, they raided a home in a cookie-cutter Vancouver subdivision packed with barrels of fentanyl-making chemicals, glassware and lab equipment.

Thousands of miles away, outside Toronto, police in August found what is believed to be the largest fentanyl lab so far in Canada — hidden at a property 30 miles from the U.S. border crossing at Niagara Falls, N.Y.

U.S. authorities say they have little indication that Canadian-made fentanyl is being smuggled south in significant quantities. But at a time when record numbers of people are dying from overdoses in the United States, the spread of clandestine fentanyl labs in Canada has the potential to undermine U.S. enforcement efforts and worsen the opioid epidemic in both nations.

Investigators in Canada say the labs are producing fentanyl for domestic users and for export to Australia, New Zealand and, they assume, the United States.

“It’d be hard to believe it’s not occurring,” said Philip Heard, commander of the organized crime unit for police in Vancouver, a city hard-hit by fentanyl overdose deaths. “Most police leaders I’ve spoken to believe our production outstrips what our domestic demand is.”

The Canadian labs are a curveball for U.S. authorities whose efforts to combat fentanyl are focused on the southern border with Mexico. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has installed about \$800 million worth of powerful scanning and detection equipment at land-border crossings since 2019. Nearly all that technology has been deployed along the U.S. southern border, where CBP confiscated nearly 27,000 pounds

SEE CANADA ON A10

A solemn night in Bethlehem



PHOTOS BY HEIDI LEVINE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

There were no parades or carols this year in the city where tradition says Jesus was born. Worshipers visited the grotto of the Church of the Nativity, where Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, implored midnight Mass attendees to look for the light. **Story, A10.**

Some schools shut down comments on Gaza war

BY HANNAH NATANSON

The Arizona state superintendent wants to close student clubs after high school members presented what he called “propaganda” about the war in Gaza. A Florida first-grade teacher faces an investigation after she emailed school leaders seeking more recognition for Palestine and Pales-

tinian students in public state-

ments. And in Virginia’s Loudoun school district, officials recently told a teacher to take down a blended Israeli-American flag after it drew complaints, according to parent Kathy Moritz, whose daughter observed the removals. Moritz said the teacher also chose to remove Jewish holiday decora-

tions, including a menorah. Moritz complained to the principal and said she was allowed to place a menorah in the counseling office, where it joined a Christmas tree already on display. A Loudoun spokeswoman said the district cannot comment on “personnel matters” but noted that policy forbids employees from making “statements that further a politi-

cal cause” during school hours.

The ferocious debate over how American students can and should speak about the war in Gaza — a conflict that burst into national view this month after three university presidents testified before Congress about how they respond to antisemitism, spurring outrage — is filtering

SEE SCHOOLS ON A9

Ukraine facing a shortage of shells

SOME UNITS HAVE CANCELED ASSAULTS

Soldiers are concerned by delays in Western aid

BY SIOBHÁN O’GRADY, DAVID L. STERN AND KOSTIANTYN KHUODOV

KYIV — Ukrainian forces are suffering from a shortage of artillery shells on the front line, prompting some units to cancel planned assaults, soldiers said, and stoking fears over how long Kyiv’s troops will be able to hold their ground against continuing Russian attacks.

The ammunition shortage is deepening the already palpable anxiety in the Ukrainian capital, as U.S. and European aid stalls and winter sets in.

“Our gunners are given a limit of shells for each target,” said a member of the 128th Mountain Assault Brigade, which is fighting in the southeastern Zaporizhzhia region.

“If the target there is smaller — for example, a mortar position — then they give five or seven shells in total,” he said in an interview last week, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

“The guys are tired — very tired,” he said. “They are still motivated — many people understand that they have no other choice.”

“But you can’t win a war only on motivation,” he continued. “You should have some kind of a numerical advantage, and with the weapons and weapons systems, it only gets worse and worse. How long can we last? It’s hard to say, but it can’t be long. Everyone understands this.”

Artem, 31, a gunner in the 148th Artillery Brigade who fires a 155mm howitzer, said his unit found a “dramatic” difference in stocks of shells after recently relocating from the southern front in Zaporizhzhia to positions in the east.

Artem said his unit was now firing just 10 to 20 shells per day at enemy targets, while previously it used an average of 50 shells, and sometimes up to 90. He spoke

SEE UKRAINE ON A11

After a fight for exoneration, a fight for health

As Glynn Simmons seeks compensation for 48 years in prison, he’s battling Stage 4 colon cancer

BY TIMOTHY BELLA

For 48 years, one month and 18 days, Glynn Simmons was trapped in an undesired hell.

Simmons was convicted and initially sentenced to the death penalty for a murder he always insisted he did not commit. By the time the state of Oklahoma conceded that he’d not gotten a fair trial and there wasn’t enough evidence to retry him, he was approaching 71, a worn-down man beset by a string of health issues, with a son and grandchildren he hoped to finally get to know outside of prison walls.

But nearly four months after being assured of his freedom, Simmons is running out of time.

The man who holds the grim record of longest wrongful-conviction case in U.S. history has Stage 4 colon cancer, which at this point offers him only a minimal chance of surviving the next five years. He should be due \$175,000 in compensation from the state

SEE SIMMONS ON A6



NICK OXFORD FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Glynn Simmons and another Black man were convicted of capital murder for a 1974 killing at a liquor store in Edmond, Okla., despite no physical evidence linking them to the crime scene.

If an octopus is so smart, should you eat it?

BY DINO GRANDONI

Octopuses can open jars, use tools, solve puzzles and even recognize individual human faces staring back at them through aquarium glass.

Should they serve as menu items, too?

Whether stuffed into sushi or draped over pasta, their savory tentacles have squirmed their way onto dinner plates around the world, serving as a staple of many East Asian and Mediterranean cuisines.

But a growing scientific understanding of the cognition of octopuses and other cephalopods is now calling into question the idea of eating these problem-solving sea creatures — as well as our notion of what exactly makes an animal “intelligent” in the first place.

“They have a kind of exploratory, inquisitive, interesting way of being in the world that I think is unexpected,” said Peter Godfrey-Smith, a philosopher at the Uni-

versity of Sydney and author of the book “Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness.”

Humanity’s relationship with octopuses is reaching an inflection point: Just as scientists begin to understand these animals’ brains, seafood companies are trying to farm the animals commercially.

Seafood purveyors say farming octopus will relieve pressure on wild populations and provide more of an increasingly popular low-fat, high-protein food. But proposals to open octopus farms are being met with opposition from environmentalists and animal welfare advocates worried about tormenting the intelligent invertebrates.

The U.S. government is now considering whether to ask for ethical reviews of scientific experiments on octopuses, just as it does for mammals such as monkeys and mice.

Adding to the sympathies for

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Two months after a Montgomery County police sergeant lost his legs after being struck by a speeding car, he’s looking ahead to running again. **B1**

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Looking for a suite challenge? Try to find all 100 nutcrackers in a toy store in this year’s Christmas puzzle. **C1**
Christopher Radko, who became a household name in the 1990s with his exquisite, hand-blown glass ornaments, is back in business. **C1**

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