

#### FACES Tori Kelly: Health scare influenced new album 'TORI' Page 14

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Biden hosts Iraqi prime minister; US presence to be discussed » Page 12



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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

## Abbey Gate review says blast wasn't preventable

#### By MATTHEW ADAMS Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The suicide bombing at the Kabul airport that killed 13 American troops and more than 150 Afghans in August 2021 was not preventable and U.S. service members did not see the suspected bomber on the morning of the attack, according to a new review by U.S. Central Command released Monday.

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, which ended Aug. 31, 2021, concluded 20 years of war in Afghanistan for the United States. It also marked the return of Taliban rule in the country, rolling back many human rights in the past 20 months, particularly for women.

The American pullout included the evacuation of thousands of Afghan nationals who fled the country with the U.S. military. The chaotic withdrawal also led to the deaths of 13 service members and 170 Afghans outside Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport on Aug. 26, 2021. This triggered widespread debate and congres-

#### SEE BLAST ON PAGE 7



DEFENSE DEPARTMENT/AF

Marines at the Abbey Gate of the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, before the blast, Aug. 26, 2021.



LASHIC PATTERSON/U.S. Army

Staff Sgt. Stetson Manuel, a robotics and autonomous systems platoon sergeant and infantryman, assembles the Ghost-X Unmanned Aircraft System during the human machine integration experiment for Project Convergence – Capstone 4 in Fort Irwin, Calif., on March 11.

## **Spread of swarm technology** US-Chinese rush to field drone mobs could fuel global arms race

By FRANK BAJAK

Associated Press s their rivalry intensifies, U.S. and Chinese military planners are gearing up for a new kind of warfare in which squadrons of air and sea drones equipped with artificial intelligence work together like a swarm of bees to overwhelm an enemy.

The planners envision a scenario in which

hundreds, even thousands of the machines engage in coordinated battle. A single controller might oversee dozens of drones. Some would scout, others attack. Some would be able to pivot to new objectives in the middle of a mission based on prior programming rather than a direct order.

The world's only AI superpowers are engaged in an arms race for swarming drones that is reminiscent of the Cold War, except drone technology will be far more difficult to contain than nuclear weapons. Because software drives the drones' swarming abilities, it could be relatively easy and cheap for rogue nations and militants to acquire their own fleets of killer robots.

The Pentagon is pushing urgent development of inexpensive, expendable drones as a

SEE SWARM ON PAGE 8

## **BUSINESS/WEATHER**

## Samsung to get \$6.4B to make chips in Texas

Associated Press

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WASHINGTON — The Biden administration has reached an agreement to provide up to \$6.4 billion in direct funding for Samsung Electronics to develop a computer chip manufacturing and research cluster in Texas.

The funding announced Monday by the Commerce Department is part of a total investment in the cluster that, with private money, is expected to exceed \$40 billion. The government support comes from the CHIPS and Sci-

ence Act, which President Joe Biden signed into law in 2022 with the goal of reviving the production of advanced computer chips domestically.

"The proposed project will propel Texas into a state-of-the-art semiconductor ecosystem," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said on a call with reporters. "It puts us on track to hit our goal of producing 20% of the world's leading edge chips in the United States by the end of the decade."

Raimondo said she expects the

project will create at least 17,000 construction jobs and more than 4,500 manufacturing jobs.

Samsung's cluster in Taylor. Texas, would include two factories that would make four- and two-nanometer chips. Also, there would be a factory dedicated to research and development, as well as a facility for the packaging that surrounds chip components.

The first factory would begin production in 2026, with the second starting in 2027, according to the government.

#### EXCHANGE RATES

Military

Euro costs (April 16) British pound (April 16) Japanese yen (April 16) South Korean won (April

Bahrain (Dinar) Britain (Pound) Canada (Dollar) China (Yuan) Denmark (Krone) Egypt (Pound) Euro

Hong Kong (Dollar)

Hungary (Forint) Israel (Shekel) Japan (Yen) Kuwait (Dinar)

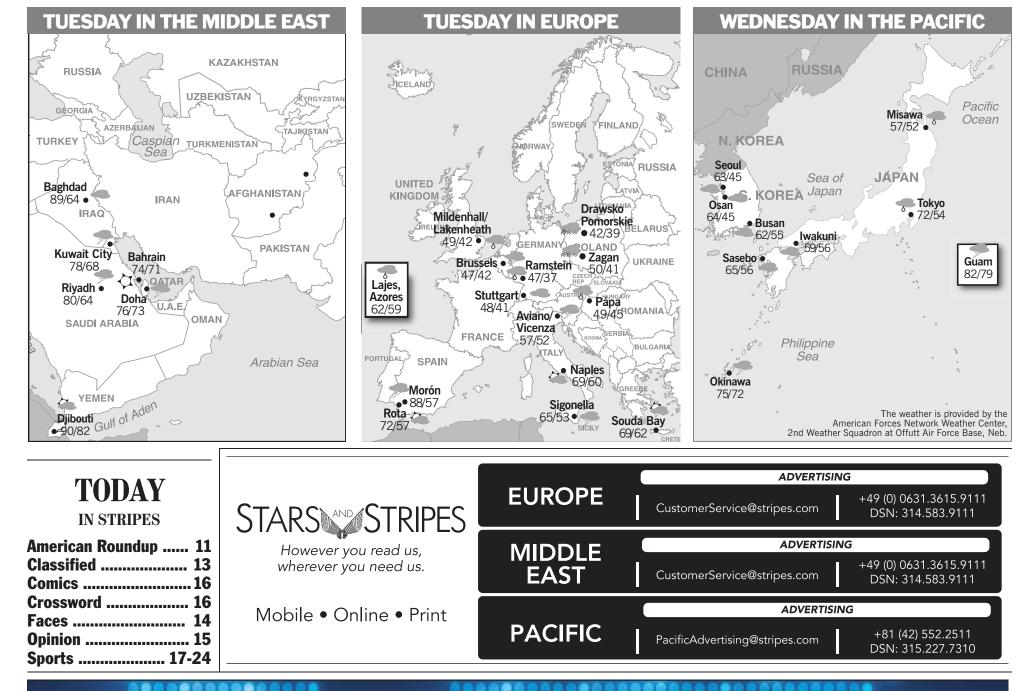
Norway (Krone) Philippines (Peso) Poland (Zloty) Saudi Arabia (Riyal)

Singapore (Dollar) South Korea (Won)

Euro

Military rates		Switzerland (Franc)	0.9143
April 16)	\$1.04	Thailand (Baht)	36.76
d (April 16)	\$1.22	Turkey (NewLira)	32.4086
n (April 16)	149.00		0211000
n won (April 16)	1348.00	(Military exchange rates are tho	se available
<b>Commercial rates</b>		to customers at military banking fac country of issuance for Japan, South	cilities in the
ar)	0.3768	many, the Netherlands and the Unit	
nd)	1.2470	For nonlocal currency exchange rat	
ar)	1.3740	chasing British pounds in Germany	
)	7.2387	your local military banking facility.	
one)	7.0142	rates are interbank rates provided f	
d)	48.2928	when buying currency. All figures	
	0.9402	currencies to one dollar, except fo	
Dollar)	7.8278	pound, which is represented in	
rint)	370.71	pound, and the euro, which is dolla	
el)	3.7468	pound, and the curo, which is dona	13 to curo.)
~	154.37	INTEREST RAT	E6
r)	0.3080	INTERESTRAT	E9
ne)	10.9492	Prime rate	8.50
Peso)	56.90	Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
y)	4.04	Federal funds market rate	5.33
(Riyal)	3.7512	3-month bill	5.39
ollar)	1.3621	30-year bond	4.63
(Won)	1386.96	Ju-year build	4.05

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## Round-the-world news for America's military.

#### Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill. Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.



# US, allies study Ukraine's Black Sea wins

#### By ALISON BATH Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Ukraine's successful drone and missile attacks on Russia's Black Sea Fleet are being studied by the U.S. Navy and NATO as the West develops strategies to confront potential Russian aggression, the service's top admiral in Europe said.

Ukraine is locked in a bitter stalemate on land, with dwindling munition supplies and Russian forces entrenched in much of the country's east. But it has found success at sea worth learning from and applying globally, analysts say.

Without a traditional navy, Ukraine has managed to sink or disable nearly one-third of the fleet, said Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Forces Command Naples.

They've done it by starting with low-cost technology and adding sophisticated weaponry to their operations as the war has developed.

The attacks have pushed the Russians further east in the Black Sea and opened a maritime corridor to allow grain shipments, which Munsch said was a significant achievement.

"They've also demonstrated how to put the Russians in such a box so that they no longer operate freely," said Munsch, speaking with reporters at a celebration of NATO's 75th anniversary aboard the amphibious command ship USS Mount Whitney on Tuesday.

The Ukrainian maritime strategy was a particular focus of the recent Black Sea Maritime Forum in Bucharest, Romania, Munsch said.

The annual talks were attended by naval personnel and other representatives from all Black Sea littoral countries except for Russia. U.S. allies like the U.K., Japan and



ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

From left, British Royal Navy Adm. Sir Keith Blount, deputy supreme allied commander Europe, U.S. Ambassador to Italy Jack Markell and Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Forces Command Naples, speak with reporters aboard U.S. 6th Fleet flagship USS Mount Whitney on April 9.

Sweden also were there.

Ukrainian use of drones and missiles reveals problems Western navies could experience in defending against such attacks, said Sebastian Bruns, a German maritime security expert and senior researcher for the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University.

Those challenges include identifying, tracking and neutralizing surface drones that barely rise above surface level. Most Western navies don't have sufficient closein weapons systems that can shoot at the angle needed when a surface drone is approaching, he said.

"I am not sure that Western navies would have similar problems as the Russians, but we too would likely lose ships. If not unit kills, then at least mission kills," said Bruns, who recently published an analysis on Black Sea naval lessons.



Images posted to social media April 18, 2022, appear to show the Russian missile cruiser Moskva damaged, on fire and leaning after taking on water.

Ukrainian use of anti-ship missiles against static targets, such as ships in port and other shore facilities, also is wreaking havoc on the Black Sea Fleet, to include installations, people and their morale, Bruns pointed out.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry on March 24 said it had disabled or destroyed 26 Russian surface vessels and one submarine.

Most recently, Ukrainian forces struck two Russian landing ships, the fleet's communications center and other facilities in Sevastopol, Crimea, on March 24, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said in a post to its official X account the same day.

"Anti-ship missiles should be prioritized in (Western) navies," Bruns said.

The lessons being learned also extend to a Taiwan defense scenario.

Deploying large numbers of cheap drones into a relatively confined battle space such as the Taiwan Strait or the seas near China could make those spaces no-go territory or escalate the costs of operating there to prohibitive levels, said James Holmes, chair of the maritime strategy program at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

The Pentagon's Replicator program, announced last year, envisions such a capability, he noted.

"If the Joint Force, along with our allies, can seal off the straits along the first island chain, it will have corralled China's navy and air force and can strike at them with missiles and drones within their own home waters," Holmes said. "That's a wicked problem for Beijing."

Ukrainian success in the Black Sea also teaches that self-defense can't be taken for granted, Holmes and Bruns said.

Opponents will try to overwhelm U.S. defenses with many weapons from different points in the hope that enough will get through to score a mission kill and take Navy ships out of action, Holmes said.

"We have done well in the Red Sea to date, but the Houthis could never match the volume of ordnance that a People's Liberation Army could put out," he said.

## South Korea defense chief: North will field hypersonic weapon

#### By DAVID CHOI Stars and Stripes CAMP HUMPHREYS, South

Korea — North Korea's test of a hypersonic glide vehicle was unsuccessful this month, but the communist regime is making progress in its development, accord-

#### Correction

A story in Friday's edition of Stars and Stripes about an F-22 Raptor rotation to Okinawa should have said the 19th Fighter Squadron had arrived at Kadena Air Base. ing to the South's defense minister.

Mounted on a Hwasong-16B intermediate-range ballistic missile, the vehicle failed during the final glide phase of its April 2 flight, National Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said Sunday on the televised talk show "Sunday Diagnosis." He cited U.S. and South Korean military assessments of the North Korean test.

Hypersonic weapons travel five times the speed of sound, or more than 3,800 mph, and can maneuver to their target after being released by a booster rocket. Traditional ballistic missiles move at a higher altitude at an arc, making it easier for an opponent to determine their trajectory.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the test, the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported April 3. It said the missile successfully flew about 620 miles.

The weapon could strike any target worldwide "rapidly, accurately and powerfully," KCNA said.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff called the North's specifications "exaggerated" in a message to reporters that day. The solidfueled ballistic missile flew roughly 370 miles from Pyongyang before falling into the Sea of Japan, or East Sea, they said.

Shin said North Korea has conducted five hypersonic weapons tests since September 2021 and continues to make improvements to its program. The April 2 missile featured ridges, or "wings," on its warhead while another missile fired Jan. 14 was smooth and cone shaped, he said.

Hypersonic weapons development is a complicated task and will take North Korea some time to master, Shin said.

"But because North Korea is concentrating on it, we believe they will accomplish their goal someday," he added.

Pyongyang has yet to demonstrate that its hypersonic glide vehicle "could function under realistic conditions" at an intermediate range of around 2,050 miles, the distance to Guam, according to an April 12 report from 38 North, a North Korea-monitoring organization based in Washington, D.C.

Despite the uncertainty in hitting long-range targets, North Korea's hypersonic weapons "have shown their potential to strike Japan if they are to be used at medium ranges," the report said.

The U.S. military is developing two hypersonic weapons programs: glide vehicles and cruise missiles that travel at hypersonic speeds, according to a Congressional Research Service report March 22. The Defense Department reportedly requested a \$6.9 billion budget for the programs for the next fiscal year.

## Lawmakers question commitment to fix poor military housing

第3種郵便物認可

#### **By GARY WARNER** Stars and Stripes

House lawmakers sharply questioned the Pentagon's commitment to fix substandard housing, contending poor living conditions undercut morale and readiness in the military.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., called the small number of military housing construction projects in the Navy budget "insanity" during a Thursday hearing of the House Appropriations Committee's subpanel on military construction, veterans affairs, and related agencies.

"The response with military family housing has been atrocious," said Wasserman Schultz, the top Democrat on the subpanel.

Rep. Mike Garcia, R-Calif., a former Navy officer, said Wednesday during a hearing of the House Appropriations Committee's defense subpanel that living in substandard housing was a major drawback to recruiting new troops and retaining them beyond their initial enlistment.

"This isn't just a money, pay, salary issue, it's quality of life at the base and in the barracks," he said. "Having to live in squalor when your civilian counterparts aren't."

During hearings Wednesday and Thursday, the Army touted a significant increase in funding for military housing, while the Navy and Marine Corps faced criticism for cutbacks in spending for housing. A congressional hearing on the Air Force's housing plan is scheduled for April 17.

A 2023 Government Accountability Office report found a lack of funding and management of military housing.

"[The Defense Department] does not provide sufficient oversight of housing programs for barracks, such as through appropriate guidance or direction to the military services on tracking, assessing, and remediating deficiencies in barracks conditions," the GAO report said.

The Pentagon reported in February that it had \$134 billion in deferred maintenance for all infrastructure, including housing, offices, and other base buildings.

The frustration from lawmakers and the findings of the GAO report echo yearslong efforts to improve living conditions on military bases following a 2019 Reuters news investigation that shocked Congress about the poor living conditions for some troops and their families.

Some military families have since testified before Congress about rodent and pest infestations, exposure to lead paint and other toxins, and water leaks that resulted in mold growth and damaged personal property. Some cases have led to lawsuits.

The military services have conceded they had relaxed oversight of the private companies that manage some housing on bases, and Congress mandated reforms.

At Wednesday's hearing, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said the service was tripling its

The construction area for a new \$28.08 million barracks building is shown March 21, at Fort McCoy, Wis.

funding request for barracks for unaccompanied enlisted soldiers.

"Readiness begins in the barracks, and the Army is dedicated to providing safe, high-quality housing and barracks for our soldiers," she said.

Army spending includes:

■ \$935 million for nine new Army barracks, three times the amount approved in 2024.

■ \$680 million for sustaining existing Army barracks.

■ \$403.7 million to build 173 new Army family homes and renovate 252 others.

The Army's proposed budget for fiscal 2025 is \$185.9 billion, a 0.2% increase from the recently approved 2024 spending plan.

Meredith Berger, the assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations, and environment, said Thursday at the second House hearing that the Navy had been able to leverage funds from the 2024 budget into improvements in housing. But substandard housing has an impact on readiness.

"The majority of our infrastructure, whether barracks, utilities or public shipyards, is not in good shape," she said. "As an institution, we have allowed these assets to degrade over time."

Berger said funds spent on housing bolster quality-of-life issues, reducing the number of sailors and Marines who join the sea services or decide to re-enlist.

Money spent on improving buildings, including housing, is a key to retention of service members that "returns infinitely more value to our warfighting force than the dollars it will cost," she said.

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Edward Banta, deputy commandant for installations and logistics, said the service's Barracks 2030 plan examines conditions at 658 barracks at Marine installations.

"Seventeen percent are not" up to standards, he said.

The 2025 budget will emphasize renovation, new furniture, upgrading Wi-Fi, and other amenities. Future budget requests will include larger construction requests. Fixing housing issues is a long-term issue, Banta said.

"We will not get out of this in one year," he said.

The overall 2025 budget request for the Department of the Navy, which includes the Marine Corps, is for \$257.6 billion, an increase of 0.7% from 2024. The request includes:

SCOTT STURKOL/Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office

■ \$245 million for housing construction.

■ \$377 million to maintain and operate more than 3,500 government-owned family housing units, more than 62,000 privatized units, and 1,650 leased family units worldwide.

■ Construction of 93 family housing units on Guam.

■ Renovation of 64 family homes in Iwakuni, Japan.

A policy change that no sailors will reside on ships when they are in port for maintenance.

Rep. John Carter, R-Texas, the chairman of the military construction, veterans affairs subpanel, suggested living space upgrades were crucial to service members and the committee might want to add more money to the 2025 budget for military housing.

"They invest their lives in the fight and we need to invest in their families," he said.

Wasserman Schultz agreed.

"The good news is we get the last word," she said. "Actually, the president gets the last word, he gets to sign it."

## Vets who recruited troops for \$65M fraud scheme sentenced to prison

#### By J.P. LAWRENCE Stars and Stripes

Two veterans convicted for their roles in bilking more than \$65 million from U.S. military health insurer Tricare have been sentenced and ordered to pay back millions of dollars, the Justice Department said Friday.

U.S. Marine veteran Joshua Morgan, 31, was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$4.4 million in restitution, a federal judge in the Southern District of California said in an order filed in early April.

Former U.S. Navy sailor Kyle Adams, 36, was sentenced to 15 months in prison and ordered to pay \$11.5 million, another court order filed in late March said.

Prosecutors say the pair recruited fellow service members

to receive expensive medications they did not need or expect to receive in exchange for kickbacks. Meanwhile, other members of the conspiracy wrote bogus prescriptions and faked paperwork to obtain millions in insurance reimbursements.

The fraud was one of many socalled compound medication schemes that put the survival of the health insurer Tricare at risk, prosecutors said.

"Today's sentencing closes the last chapter on this outrageous fraud scheme that almost put Tricare into bankruptcy," U.S. attorney Tara McGrath said in a statement Friday.

Morgan and Adams worked as recruiters for Jimmy and Ashley Collins, a husband-and-wife team based in Tennessee.

Service members were paid

\$300 a month to receive creams and erectile dysfunction pills as part of a "medical evaluation." The fraud ring would then receive millions in insurance reimbursements, a criminal complaint said.

Morgan, a sergeant in Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, based at Miramar Air Station in California, received \$2.6 million for his work as a recruiter for the fraud, a sentencing document said. Adams received \$1 million for his work recruiting 88 people.

"It took very little work to sign people up to receive free money," said Morgan, according to a sentencing document.

He said service members knew the scheme was dubious. Many of his recruits signed up because they desperately needed the extra \$300 a month, Morgan said.

As to why Morgan took part in

the scheme, he said it was due to his status as a Marine at the bottom of the pay scale, with a large car payment, and that he badly needed the extra money, the document said.

The Marine used his cut of the proceeds on nightclubs and topshelf alcohol. He bought two luxury cars, which were seized by the government, the sentencing document said.

Adams, another recruiter, conceded he "just went with it" and "turned a blind eye" to the illegality of the scheme due to how much money was coming in, his sentencing document said.

Two doctors, Carl Lindblad and Susan Vergot, and a nurse practitioner, Candace Craven, also took part in the scheme by writing fraudulent prescriptions, the Justice Department said. A pharmacy that filled the fraudulent prescriptions, CFK, Inc., pleaded guilty in 2019 to a conspiracy to submit false claims.

Jimmy and Ashley Collins, the ringleaders of the scheme, were sentenced in January to a 10-year prison term and 18 months in home confinement, respectively. The couple was also ordered to pay \$65 million.

The couple targeted a Tricare billing change that led to inflated costs for compound medications, a practice in which a pharmacist creates a personalized blend of drugs.

These bespoke medications cannot be evaluated like massproduced drugs, are more expensive and reimbursed at a far higher rate by insurance companies, a statement by the Justice Department said in October.



JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

Base worker Akira Yasui donates blood to the Japanese Red Cross at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, on Thursday.

## Japanese Red Cross collects blood at Marine base, first since COVID

By JONATHAN SNYDER AND HANA KUSUMOTO Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STA-TION IWAKUNI, Japan — The Japanese Red Cross recently parked its blood-collection bus on this base south of Hiroshima for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marine spouse Catherine Matchem-Watkins was among the Americans donating their vital fluid Thursday during the blood drive by the organization's Yamaguchi Prefecture Blood Center.

She has an American Red Cross blood donor card and was excited to receive Japan's version.

"I've always wanted to donate blood to Japan because I've donated blood in the States," the Ma-

By Jonathan Snyder

Stars and Stripes

A \$350 million stealth fighter

was damaged last week when its

landing gear collapsed while be-

ing towed from an Okinawa run-

said Monday.

day.

way, an Air Force spokesman

The F-22 Raptor recently as-

signed to Kadena Air Base land-

ed around 10:30 a.m. Thursday without incident after a training

flight, Staff Sgt. Gary Hilton,

spokesman for the 18th Wing, told

Stars and Stripes by email Mon-

the aircraft experienced a mis-

"At approximately 11:50 a.m.

rine Corps Community Services employee told Stars and Stripes at the drive. "It's always been a thing for me to just make sure I'm giving back because you never know when blood can save a life and it actually helped save my son's life."

The Japanese Red Cross began collecting blood at MCAS Iwakuni in 2004; however, only Japanese employees could donate until 2017, when the American Red Cross began providing translators, said Takuya Nakagawa, Japanese Red Cross spokesman.

The entire donation process was simple and easy with the translator's help, Matchem-Watkins said.

Nine Americans donated blood on Thursday, Nakagawa said.

Jet landing gear failure damages

"We are thankful that they cooperated in donating blood, which is also a contribution to the community," he said.

The last blood drive at MCAS Iwakuni was held on Aug. 21, 2019,  $4^{1/2}$  years ago, Nakagawa said.

The blood center hosts about 700 blood drives annually, which means two blood drive buses are active somewhere in Yamaguchi Prefecture every day, Nakagawa said.

Before the pandemic, the Japanese Red Cross visited the air station twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall.

They expect to return to that schedule with the next blood drive on base in December, Nakagawa said.

# **USS Boxer makes U-turn for repairs in short-lived tour**

#### By ALEX WILSON Stars and Stripes

Maintenance problems forced an amphibious assault ship to return to California last week, just days into its first deployment in five years.

The USS Boxer left San Diego, its homeport, on April 1 for the Indo-Pacific, but turned back toward home Thursday for "additional maintenance in support of its deployment," according to a statement 3rd Fleet made to several news outlets.

"USS Boxer will resume its deployment in the near future," the statement said.

Third Fleet didn't elaborate on the maintenance problem, but US-NI News reported Thursday it was related to the ship's rudder. Repairs could take up to three weeks, according to the report, which cited an unnamed defense official.

A spokesperson for 3rd Fleet did not respond to an email and phone call requesting comment.

The 843-foot Boxer is the flagship of an amphibious ready group that includes the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit from Camp Pendleton, Calif., and two other ships, the amphibious transport dock USS Somerset and landing ship dock USS Harpers Ferry.

The group also includes new amphibious combat vehicles designed to replace the amphibious assault vehicles in which eight Marines and a sailor drowned off Southern California in July 2020.

The Boxer was already under scrutiny following significant mechanical issues that delayed its deployment multiple times.

A Navy review of three separate engineering failures found that "bad leaders, a complacent crew and maintenance cost-cutting by the Navy" prevented the ship from deploying for more than a year, KPBS, the Public Broadcasting Service station in San Diego, reported March 4, citing Navy investigations obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

The Boxer last deployed in 2019 to the Persian Gulf amid flaring tensions with Iran. In 2020, BAE Systems received a \$200.3 million contract to perform approximately 18 months of maintenance and modernization, with work scheduled to begin in June 2020 and conclude by December 2021, BAE Systems announced in April 2020.

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That maintenance ultimately lasted more than two years, with the ship going to sea again in June 2022, according to a photo the Boxer posted that month to the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

However, overhauled engine components called forced draft blowers failed in August 2022, prompting additional repairs, which also failed, KPBS reported.

Issues with the ship's boiler and its engine's main reduction gear arose in the following months, KPBS reported.

The Navy's chief of naval operations, Adm. Lisa Franchetti, said she'd ordered a "deep dive" investigation into the issues, Military.com reported April 8.

The Navy is facing an estimated \$1.8 billion backlog in maintenance for surface warships, according to a 2023 report from the Government Accountability Office.

The GAO also found that ship casualty reports — descriptions of events that impair a ship's ability to conduct its primary mission were also on the rise, primarily with littoral combat ships and Wasp-class amphibious assault ships like the Boxer.

Wasp-class ships in fiscal year 2011 experienced 18 level-three and level-four casualty reports, the highest categories. In fiscal year 2021, that rose to 61 casualty reports.

Freedom-class and Independent-class littoral combat ships saw the second-highest increase, rising from 18 and 11 reports in 2011 to 44 and 37 reports, respectively, according to the GAO.

In 2020, the Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Detroit was forced to cut a counternarcotic operation short after a critical component in its propulsion system failed.



MARK FARAM/U.S. Navy

hap with its landing gear while being towed," he said. "There are no injuries as a result of this mishap, and a thorough investigation will be conducted."

stealth fighter at Kadena Air Base

Raptors from the 199th and 19th Fighter Squadrons at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam arrived at Kadena on March 28 to join other fourth- and fifth-generation fighters, including F-35A Lightning IIs, already deployed there, the Air Force announced April 5.

The Defense Department in December 2022 unveiled a twoyear plan to rotate fighter squadrons through Kadena — a key fighter and air transport hub in the Western Pacific — and retire or reassign two squadrons of aging F-15C/Ds stationed there for decades.

The Air Force has yet to announce a permanent replacement for the F-15s.

A similar incident occurred Dec. 1, 2022, at Kadena when the nose of a Marine F-35B Lightning II while being towed on the flight line dropped after the forward landing gear malfunctioned.

"We are committed to conducting safe flight operations as we uphold our regional defense commitments," Hilton said.

The amphibious assault ship USS Boxer returned to its homeport days after leaving for a deployment for "additional maintenance."

第3種郵便物認可

# Air Force recruiters try to rebound enlistment slump

## New policies and live events used to pull itself back up

#### By Rose L. THAYER Stars and Stripes

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — A 33-year-old mother pushing a baby stroller stopped Saturday at the Air Force recruiting tent of the Great Texas Air Show to ask about the differences in the military services. She asked what the Air Force could offer her.

A man in his 30s joked with recruiters that he is past his enlistment window. He's not, the recruiter told him. People can enlist through age 42. He seemed interested and bantered with the recruiter for several minutes about what it would take to enlist and what his options could be. However, the tattoo on his hand is a little too big to meet even the new relaxed tattoo policy.

These interactions — intertwined with children and adults eager to do pushups to earn free Air Force-branded swag — are just one piece of how the service has pulled itself out of a recruiting slump that left it short on its enlistment goal last year.

"It's planting a seed," said Master Sgt. Erica Jones, a recruiter in San Antonio who worked the air show in khaki pants and a blue collared shirt. "It does work."

Each of the services has found the recruiting environment to be one of the most difficult in U.S. history, with only about 23% of Americans between ages 17 to 24 qualified to serve and less than 10% with an interest in doing so.

In fiscal 2023 the Air Force reached only 89% of its active-duty recruiting goal of 26,977 enlistments, according to Defense Department data. The Army and Navy also fell short at 77% and 80%, respectively.

Data for fiscal 2024 recruitment shows the Army and Navy are still behind schedule, while the Air Force is on track to succeed. By the end of September, Air Force recruiters need to have enlisted 25,900 new airmen.

"While we are cautiously optimistic that we can make our enlisted accessions goal for [fiscal] 2024, we cannot take our foot off the gas," Brig. Gen. Christopher Amrhein, Air Force Recruiting Service commander, said in a statement. "We need to continue to provide training to our key front-line force — the flight chief and recruiters. We need to contin-



Rose L. THAYER/Stars and Stripes

Senior Airman Jennifer Farias discusses enlistment options with Arianna Garcia, 17, left, and her mother, Jessica Garcia, right, at the Great Texas Air Show earlier this month.

ue to look at policy revisions which may still be barriers to service, as well as shorten the medical processing timeline and seek additional strategic marketing opportunities."

At the air show at Randolph, each of the Amrhein's lines of effort were on display. Two men already committed to attend Air Force Special Warfare training helped the public try their best at pullups. Both said they have spent months waiting for their medical records to process so they can ship out to boot camp.

Meanwhile, Jones — the recruiter — politely dispelled anyone's excuses that countered the service's policy changes, such as the loosened policies on tattoos, age restrictions, the body fat standards for new recruits and retaking a failed drug test during the enlistment process.

Collectively, these changes have allowed more than 3,200 people to enlist, said Leslie Brown, spokeswoman for Air Force Recruiting Service. That's slightly more than the number of recruits that the Air Force fell short of enlisting last year.

Of those, more than 2,600 enlisted by permitting a higher percentage of body fat. Only one person has failed to adapt and meet the physical standards required to complete basic military training, Brown said.

While the Air Force seeks out recruits at all sorts of events and locations, air shows are the second-most effective for enlistments, with high school visits the most valuable. Air shows tend to attract people who are interested in the service and are also likely to influence others to join, Brown said.

"These events provide the opportunity to make our bases, equipment, and our people more accessible, allowing for more engagement and increasing the public's familiarity with the Air Force," she said.

At Randolph's air show, the public had an opportunity to see aircraft performing overhead, people could climb into airplanes and ground vehicles, try on a parachute pack, test their strength and agility on a physical fitness course, and go inside a trailer tricked out with a virtual reality simulation of a firefight.

Senior Airman Chris Bowser helped people try on Special Warfare equipment and answered endless questions about how it worked. Several people came by curious about what happens when the parachute doesn't deploy. There is a backup, he explained, holding up the additional pack.

Many visitors to the recruiting tent had already decided on an Air Force career, they just needed help weighing their options. A college student with her mother pulled out a piece of notebook paper with her military assessment test scores handwritten across it. She'd been talking to the Army but wondered whether she should consider the Air Force instead.

A group of teenagers who are years from eligibility asked Senior Airman Jennifer Farias, a recruiter, about her pay, her housing, if she makes enough money to buy what she wants. Farias answered yes, she makes a decent living and does not have to pay her own rent.

They each asked to take a free Air Force pen, then a cup, and then a brochure before leaving the tent.

A 17-year-old girl stopped at the recruiting tent with her parents, quite certain she's ready to enlist after high school graduation. Her mother said she's eager for the good opportunities that military service could give her.

"I have lots of family in the military," the 17-year-old said. "I don't want to be stuck at home doing nothing."



EVAN MUELLER/U.S. Navy

Command Senior Chief Petty Officer Brianna Ridlon and Lt. Cmdr. Jesse Crider pose atop one of the USS Ronald Reagan's anchors at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on April 1.

## Navy chief reenlists atop USS Reagan's gold anchor in Japan

#### By KELLY AGEE Stars and Stripes

Command Senior Chief Petty Officer Brianna Ridlon donned a harness, eye protection and a safety helmet earlier this month to reenlist on the aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan.

Not so much aboard the carrier but while suspended on its starboard side anchor, which sports a fresh coat of gold paint.

"I think it makes it more memorable and adds more of a sense of heritage in the Navy as well as being connected to the Navy's mission and what we're doing and why we are serving," Ridlon, of San Mateo, Calif., told Stars and Stripes Friday.

The Ronald Reagan deck crew painted the ship's two 30-ton anchors gold last month, signifying the crew's achievement in reenlisting or retaining a significant number of sailors.

Ridlon added a coda to the achievement by reenlisting short-ly after, on April 1.

She joined the Navy in 2005 as an undesignated seaman in hopes of someday becoming a judge advocate general. She became a legalman in 2008 and has served two of her 18 years in the Navy aboard the Ronald Reagan.

For Lt. Cmdr. Jesse Crider, who also mounted the anchor to administer the oath, the opportunity was an honor and meaningful in many ways.

"A golden anchor has a great deal of significance and symbolizes many things to a chief petty officer, two of which are unity and service," he said by email Friday. "Conducting her reenlistment on the chief petty officer birthday on the largest golden anchor in the

on the largest golden anchor in the Fleet is very symbolic of unity, service, and the weight of responsibility chief petty officers share," said Crider, of Utica, Mich., and head of the carrier's deck department.

The chief petty officer rank was established 131 years ago on April 1, 1893.

Ridlon said the anchor reenlistment idea came from Crider and the boatswain's mate chiefs.

"This was the first time I have done something cool for a reenlistment," she said. "All the other times I just wanted to, you know, do a quick ceremony and sign the papers."

Ridlon said being on the anchor for her reenlistment wasn't too scary.

"I think I was a little intimidated because the deck sailors that were helping us get up there were so comfortable moving around," she said. "I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm going to embarrass myself if I fall or do something dumb,' because all of the deck sailors were so comfortable up there."

Ridlon celebrated the chief's birthday by participating in a morning run and cake cutting before heading to the anchor.

"You see people reenlisting in some of the coolest places, in helicopters, aircraft and I've seen divers reenlist underwater," she said. "It really just brings out that purpose in why we continue to serve."

# Irish protesters shut down road to airport

#### By MATTHEW M. BURKE Stars and Stripes

Passengers attempting to catch flights Sunday at an airport in western Ireland were forced to abandon their vehicles and walk to the terminal because of a sit-in by opponents of U.S. support for Israel, according to local media outlets.

About two dozen activists demonstrated on the main N19 route in and out of Shannon Airport for more than an hour starting at about 3 p.m., the Clare Champion reported Sunday.

The airport, in southwestern Ireland's County Clare, has been used for stopovers and refueling of U.S. military aircraft for decades, the Irish Examiner wrote in August 2021. In 2020 alone, around 75,000 U.S. troops passed through its gates.

About 500 protesters, led by local

human rights group Shannonwatch, arrived at the airport's main entrance around 2 p.m., the Champion said.

"The Irish government must now take action to end U.S. military use of Shannon airport immediately and this must be on a permanent basis," the group said in a statement.

Police eventually began shuttling passengers and airport staff until protesters dispersed, Clare FM reported Sunday.

No arrests were made, national police spokesman Sean Mac Seoin said in a statement Monday.

After the initial protest broke up around 3 p.m., about two dozen people sat in the road and blocked traffic, the Champion reported. They continued to block access until just before 4:30 p.m., when police removed them.

American usage of the airport

came under intense scrutiny in the previous decade after rights groups identified it as a stopover for a CIA rendition program between 2001 and 2006, according to a 2014 report in the Irish Times.

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The planes moved al-Qaida suspects between countries with socalled "black sites," where torture and human rights abuses took place, according to the U.K.-based Rendition Project.

## **Blast:** US confirms identity of the bomber

#### sional criticism.

Former Marine Sgt. Tyler Vargas-Andrews told the House Foreign Affairs Committee in March 2023 that his unit warned commanders they saw two suspects in the crowd outside the Abbey Gate of the Kabul airport who fit a description flagged by U.S. intelligence.

But the Marines said they were denied permission to shoot.

Vargas-Andrews, who was injured during the blast but not interviewed in the initial investigation, said an intelligence bulletin went out at about 2 a.m. on the day of the suicide attack describing a potential bomber and his male companion. Vargas-Andrews said he and others saw the individuals, "nervously looking up at our position," between noon and 1 p.m. When Marines relayed their findings to a commander and asked for permission to shoot, the commander said he did not have the authority to approve such an action, Vargas-Andrews told law-makers.

In August, Army Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla, commander of U.S. Central Command, directed U.S. Army Central to conduct a supplemental review following public testimony and other public statements regarding the events.

In five months, 13 service members from the Marines and the Army conducted more than 50 interviews and compiled more than 1,200 pages of documents and imagery.

"The suicide bomber was not previously identified in the crowd, nor was there an opportunity for service members to engage him prior to the attack on August 26, 2021," CENTCOM said in its statement.

The review also found the Abbey Gate bombing was not preventable at the tactical level without degrading the mission. It also found military leaders were present and made "sound tactical decisions," and it is unlikely an improvised explosive device, or IED, test run occurred outside Abbey Gate on Aug. 21, 2021, though investigators were unable to rule it out completely.

For the first time, the U.S. military is confirming the bomber was Abdul Rahman al-Logari, an Islamic State militant who had been in an Afghan prison but was released by the Taliban as the group took control of the country that summer, The Associated Press reported.

August 2021 was not preventable and U.S. service members did not see the suspected bomber on the

morning of the attack, according to a new review by U.S. Central Command released Monday.

The supplemental review was completed Jan. 16 and senior de-

partment leadership was informed of the findings and recommendations the following month. CENTCOM is in the process of briefing the Gold Star families of the 13 service members killed in the attack, according to the statement.

## Sex crimes charges dropped against California Marine after plea deal

#### Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A Southern California Marine accused of having sex with a missing 14-year-old girl found in his Camp Pendleton barracks room last summer no longer faces sex crimes charges, military officials said this week.

Under an agreement offered by his defense attorney, Pfc. Avery Rosario pleaded guilty Tuesday to breach of restriction, for leaving the base without permission, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

He was sentenced to time served and agreed to be administratively separated, essentially fired from the Marine Corps without a dishonorable discharge.

Before the plea deal, Rosario faced charges alleging sexual assault after he was arrested June 28 when the missing girl was discovered in his room. His attorney maintained Rosario thought the girl was an adult. She was returned to her family.

The decision to dismiss allegations that Rosario sexually assaulted a minor came after consultation with the girl and her family through the girl's attorney, a military spokesperson told the Union-Tribune.

A relative of the teen told NBC San Diego after Tuesday's hearing that the family did not wish to comment.

According to the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, the teen's grandmother had reported her as a runaway on June 13, four days after she disappeared. The grandmother told authorities the teen had run away before but usually quickly returned.

Capt. Katherine Malcolm, an attorney for Rosario, said in court that the Marine had met the teen on the Tinder dating app and that her client had "a genuine belief" that she was 21 years old. Rosario's friends told investigators they also thought she was in her early 20s, the Union-Tribune reported.





# **Swarm:** China's military claims drones 'self-healed' after being jammed in air

#### FROM PAGE 1

deterrent against China acting on its territorial claim on Taiwan. Washington says it has no choice but to keep pace with Beijing. Chinese officials say AI-enabled weapons are inevitable so they, too, must have them.

The unchecked spread of swarm technology "could lead to more instability and conflict around the world," said Margarita Konaev, an analyst with Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

As the undisputed leaders in the field, Washington and Beijing are best equipped to set an example by putting limits on military uses of drone swarms. But their intense competition, China's military aggression in the South China Sea and persistent tensions over Taiwan make the prospect of cooperation look dim.

The idea is not new. The United Nations has tried for more than a decade to advance drone non-proliferation efforts that could include limits such as forbidding the targeting of civilians or banning the use of swarms for ethnic cleansing.

#### **Contracts offer clues**

Drones have been a priority for both powers for years, and each side has kept its advances secret, so it's unclear which country might have an edge.

A 2023 Georgetown study of AIrelated military spending found that more than a third of known contracts issued by both U.S. and Chinese military services over eight months in 2020 were for intelligent uncrewed systems.

The Pentagon sought bids in January for small, unmanned maritime "interceptors." The specifications reflect the military's ambition: The drones must be able to transit hundreds of miles of "contested waterspace," work in groups in waters without GPS, carry 1,000-pound payloads, attack hostile craft at 40 mph and execute "complex autonomous behaviors" to adapt to a target's evasive tactics.

It's not clear how many drones a single person would control. A spokesman for the defense secretary declined to say, but a recently published Pentagon-backed study offers a clue: A single operator supervised a swarm of more than 100 cheap air and land drones in late 2021 in an urban warfare exercise at an Army training site at Fort Campbell, Tenn.

The CEO of a company developing software to allow multiple drones to collaborate said in an interview that the technology is bounding ahead. "We're enabling a single operator to direct right now half a dozen," said Lorenz Meier of Auterion, which is working on the technology for the U.S. military and its allies. He said that number is expected to increase to dozens and within a year to hundreds.

Not to be outdone, China's military claimed last year that dozens of aerial drones "self-healed" after jamming cut their communications. An official documentary said they regrouped, switched to self-guidance and completed a search-and-destroy mission unaided, detonating explosive-laden drones on a target.

In justifying the push for drone swarms, China hawks in Washington offer this scenario: Beijing invades Taiwan then stymies U.S. intervention efforts with waves of air and sea drones that deny American and allied planes, ships and troops a foothold.

A year ago, CIA Director William Burns said Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping had instructed his military to "be ready by 2027" to invade. But that doesn't mean an invasion is likely, or that the U.S.-China arms race over AI will not aggravate global instability.

#### **Kissinger urged action**

Just before he died last year, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger urged Beijing and Washington to work together to discourage AI arms proliferation. They have "a narrow window of opportunity," he said.

"Restraints for AI need to occur before AI is built into the security structure of each society," Kissinger wrote with Harvard's Graham Allison.

Xi and President Joe Biden made a verbal agreement in November to set up working groups on AI safety, but that effort has so far taken a back seat to the arms race for autonomous drones.

The competition is not apt to build trust or reduce the risk of conflict, said William Hartung, a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

If the U.S. is "going full speed ahead, it's most likely China will accelerate whatever it's doing," Hartung said.

There's a risk China could offer swarm technology to U.S. foes or repressive countries, analysts say. Or it could be stolen. Other countries developing the tech, such as Russia, Israel, Iran and Turkey, could also spread the know-how.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in January that U.S.-China talks set to begin sometime this spring will address AI



PHOTOS BY DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY/AP

Drones fly in a Defense Department urban warfare exercise at Fort Campbell, Tenn., in 2021. A single operator supervised a swarm of more than 100 cheap, uncrewed air and land drones at the exercise.



Drones and participants in the exercise pose at Fort Campbell. U.S. and Chinese military planners are readying themselves for a new kind of war where battleships, fighter jets and amphibious landings cede prevalence to squadrons of Al-enabled air and sea drones.

safety. Neither the defense secretary's office nor the National Security Council would comment on whether the military use of drone swarms might be on the agenda.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

#### Five-year wait

Military analysts, drone makers and AI researchers don't expect fully capable, combat-ready swarms to be fielded for five years or so, though big breakthroughs could happen sooner.

"The Chinese have an edge in hardware right now. I think we have an edge in software," said CEO Adam Bry of U.S. drone maker Skydio, which supplies the Army, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the State Department, among other agencies.

Chinese military analyst Song Zhongping said the U.S. has "stronger basic scientific and technological capabilities" but added that the American advantage is not "impossible to surpass." He said Washington also tends to overestimate the effect of its computer chip export restrictions on China's drone swarm ad-

vances. Paul Scharre, an AI expert at the Center for a New American Security think tank, believes the rivals are at rough parity.

"The bigger question for each country is about how do you use a

drone swarm effectively?" he said. That's one reason all eyes are on the war in Ukraine, where drones work as eyes in the sky to make un-

detected front-line maneuvers all but impossible. They also deliver explosives and serve as sea-skimming ship killers.

Drones in Ukraine are often lost to jamming. Electronic interference is just one of many challenges for drone swarm development. Researchers are also focused on the difficulty of marshaling hundreds of air and sea drones in semi-autonomous swarms over vast expanses of the western Pacific for a potential war over Taiwan.

A secretive, now-inactive \$78 million program announced early last year by the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, seemed tailor-made for the Taiwan inva-

sion scenario.

The Autonomous Multi-Domain Adaptive Swarms-of-Swarms is a mouthful to say, but the mission is clear: Develop ways for thousands of autonomous land, sea and air drones to "degrade or defeat" a foe in seizing contested turf.

#### **Drones improvise**

A separate DARPA program called OFFensive Swarm-Enabled Tactics, had the goal of marshaling upward of 250 land-based drones to assist Army troops in urban warfare.

Project coordinator Julie Adams, an Oregon State robotics professor, said swarm commanders in the exercise managed to choreograph up to 133 ground and air vehicles at a time. The drones were programmed with a set of tactics they could perform semiautonomously, including indoor reconnaissance and simulated enemy kills.

Under the direction of a swarm commander, the fleet acted something like an infantry squad whose soldiers are permitted some improvisation as long as they stick to orders.

"It's what I would call supervisory interaction, in that the human could stop the command or stop the tactic," Adams said. But once a course of action — such as an attack — was set in motion, the drone was on its own.

Adams said she was particularly impressed with a swarm commander in a different exercise last year at Fort Moore, Ga., who single-handedly managed a 45-drone swarm over 2.5 hours with just 20 minutes of training.

"It was a pleasant surprise," she said.

A reporter had to ask: Was he a video game player?

Yes, she said. "And he had a VR headset at home."

## MIDEAST

# Israel-Iran shadow war exposed, what's next?

#### By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT — Iran's unprecedented attack on Israel early Sunday marked a change in approach for Tehran, which had relied on proxies across the Middle East since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October.

All eyes are now on whother Is ANALYSIS

whether Israel chooses to take further military action, while Washington

seeks diplomatic measures instead to ease regional tensions. Iran says the attack was in response to an airstrike widely

blamed on Israel that destroyed what Iran says were consular offices in Syria and killed two generals with its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard earlier this month.

Israel said almost all the over 300 drones and missiles launched overnight by Iran were shot down by its anti-missile defense system, backed by the U.S. and Britain. The sole reported casualty was a wounded girl in southern Israel, and a missile struck an Israeli airbase, causing light damage.

Still, the chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guard called the operation successful.

Iran has managed to strike a balance between retaliating publicly for the strike in Damascus and avoiding provoking further Israeli military action at least initially, which could lead to a much wider conflict, said Mona Yacoubian, vice president of the Middle East and North Africa center at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

"Both (Iran and Israel) are able at this point to claim victory and step down off the precipice, par-



Israeli Iron Dome air defense system launches to intercept missiles fired from Iran on Sunday.

ticularly since there were no Israeli civilians killed," Yacoubian said.

The world was still waiting, however, for the result of an Israeli War Cabinet meeting on Sunday. Israeli hard-liners have pushed for a response, but others have suggested restraint, saying Israel should focus on strengthening budding ties with Arab partners.

"We will build a regional coalition and collect the price from Iran, in the way and at the time that suits us," said Benny Gantz, a member of the War Cabinet.

On Monday, Israel's military chief said the country would re-

spond to the attack.

Analysts say Iran sent a message that it would be willing to escalate and change its rules of engagement in its shadow war with Israel.

"It's a warning shot, saying that if Israel breaks the rules, there are consequences," said Magnus Ranstorp, strategic adviser at the Swedish Defense University.

Iran's attack has further stoked fears of the war in Gaza causing regional havoc.

But Iran maintains that it does not seek all-out war across the region. Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that Iran has "no intention of continuing defensive operations" at this point unless it is attacked.

Iran stressed that it targeted Israeli facilities involved in the Damascus attack, not civilians or "economic areas."

After Israel began its offensive in Gaza against Hamas, Iranbacked groups were involved militarily while Tehran sat on the sidelines.

Lebanon's Hezbollah group fired rockets into northern Israel. Yemen's Houthi rebels attacked Western ships on the Red Sea.

An umbrella group of Iranbacked Iraqi militias attacked U.S. military positions in Iraq and Syria.

Now, Tehran is "willing to up the ante" without relying on proxies, said the director of the Carnegie Middle East Center, Maha Yahya.

Still, Iran only went so far.

"They gave enough warning that this was coming, and I think they knew that they (the drones and missiles) would be brought down before they reached Israeli territory," Yahya said.

She also noted that the recent mounting pressure on Israel over its conduct in Gaza has now shifted to deescalating regional tensions instead.

Yacoubian says Washington has a critical role to play in avoiding further escalations.

Israel taking further military action does not seem popular among its allies including the United States, said Eldad Shavit, who heads the Israel-U.S. Research Program at Israeli think tank the Institute for National Security Studies.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby told NBC that President Joe Biden does not want an escalation in the regional conflict or a "wider war" with Iran, and is "working on the diplomatic side of this personally."

Urgent meetings of the G7 the informal gathering of industrialized countries that includes the United States, United Kingdom, and France — and the U.N. Security Council were held Sunday.

G7 meeting participants in a statement unanimously condemned Iran's attack, saying "we stand ready to take further measures now and in response to further destabilizing initiatives."

## US details Pentagon's role in defending Israel from Iran attack

#### By J.P LAWRENCE Stars and Stripes

U.S. forces in the Middle East shot down dozens of missiles and drones over the weekend as Iran launched its first ever attack from its own territory on Israel, senior White House officials said.

The Iranian attack involved more than 300 aerial munitions, including 100 ballistic missiles, more than 30 cruise missiles and 150 one-way attack drones, senior administration officials said in a telephone press conference Sunday.

The White House believes that 99% of the aerial threats were intercepted and that the attack caused no significant damage, said a senior administration official who was unauthorized to be identified on the record.

U.S. Air Force, Navy and Army assets participated in the operation to shoot down Iranian missiles and drones, which one offi-



OLIVIA GIBSON/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles assigned to the 494th Fighter Squadron sit on the flight line at RAF Lakenheath, England, in October 2023. Fighter planes from the squadron shot down Iranian drones headed for Israel, White House officials said Sunday.

cial called a "spectacular success," with no American casualties.

Some 70 Iranian drones were shot down by fighter pilots from

the 494th Fighter Squadron based out of RAF Lakenheath and the 335th Fighter Squadron from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., a senior official said. The destroyers USS Arleigh Burke and USS Carney in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea took down between four and six ballistic missiles, officials said. Meanwhile, an Army Patriot missile battery deployed to Irbil, Iraq, shot down a ballistic missile headed from Iran toward Israel.

Israeli air defense systems were responsible for most of the shootdowns, the administration officials said.

Some of the U.S. units involved were part of a move by Washington over the last week to bring additional aircraft and ships to the region, in anticipation of the attack.

"Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our service members, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles," President Joe Biden said late Saturday in Washington.

The U.S., U.K., France and oth-

er countries prepared for two weeks to defend against the weapons strikes, which Iran said would be retribution for Israel killing two of its generals in a strike in Syria at the beginning of April.

Iran and Israel have engaged in a shadow war for many years, but the Hamas-Israel war that began Oct. 7 has brought that conflict into the open. Munitions also were launched from Iraq, Syria and Yemen, where Iranian proxy militias operate.

The White House said that Iran's intent was to inflict significant damage in Israel. Tehran didn't give prior warning of the attack, and the scope of the operation is seen as being on the high end of how the administration expected Iran would respond.

As far as what's next, one senior administration official said the White House would not envision the U.S. participating with Israel in a counteroffensive against Iran.

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# FBI opens criminal probe into bridge crash

#### By Eric Tucker AND SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

The FBI is conducting a criminal investigation into the deadly collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge that is focused on the circumstances leading up to it and whether all federal laws were followed, according to someone familiar with the matter.

The person was not authorized to discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity to The Associated Press.

FBI agents were aboard the cargo ship Dali on Monday conducting court-authorized law enforcement activity, the agency said in a statement. It didn't elaborate and said it wouldn't comment further on the investigation, which was first reported by The Washington Post.

Meanwhile, Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott on Monday announced a partnership with two law firms to "launch legal action to hold the wrongdoers responsible" and mitigate harm to city residents.

The massive Dali left Baltimore's port in the early hours of March 26, laden with cargo and headed for Sri Lanka, when it struck one of the bridge's supporting columns, causing the span to collapse into the Patapsco River and sending six members of a roadwork crew plunging to their deaths.

Divers have recovered three of the six bodies from the wreckage. The Dali experienced apparent electrical issues before leaving port, according to a different

source with knowledge of the sit-

uation. The person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to comment, said alarms went off on the ship's refrigerated containers while it was still docked in Baltimore, likely indicating an inconsistent power supply.

The ship's crew was aware of the issues and indicated they would be addressed, according to the source.

Officials with the National Transportation Safety Board have said their investigation will include an inquiry into whether the ship experienced power issues before starting its voyage.

Board Chair Jennifer Homendy said last week that the investigation is focused on the ship's electrical system generally.

The ship experienced power issues moments before the crash, as is evident in videos that show its lights going out and coming back on.

Homendy said information gleaned from the vessel's voyage data recorder is relatively basic, "so that information in the engine room will help us tremendously."

## Trump's hush-money trial gets started in NY with jury selection

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**By Jennifer Peltz** AND MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK - Donald Trump arrived Monday at a New York court for the start of jury selection in his hush money trial, marking a historic moment as the former president and current White House hopeful answers to criminal charges.

It's the first criminal trial of any former U.S. commander-in-chief and the first of Trump's four indictments to reach trial. Because he is also the presumptive nominee for this year's Republican ticket, the trial will produce the head-spinning split-screen of a presidential candidate spending his days in court and, he has said, "campaigning during the night."

At the outset of Monday's court proceedings, Judge Juan M. Merchan denied a defense request to recuse himself from the case. Also before jury selection, prosecutors asked a judge to fine Trump \$3,000 over social media posts about key witnesses.

Prosecutors from the Manhattan District Attorney's office are seeking a \$1,000 fine for each of three posts that they say violate gag order that bars him from commenting on witnesses

Scores of people are expected to be called into the courtroom to begin the process of finding 12 jurors, plus six alternates. Trump's notoriety would make the process of picking a jury a near-herculean task in any year, but it's likely to be especially challenging now, unfolding in a closely contested presidential election in the city where Trump grew up and catapulted to celebrity status before winning the White House.

Merchan has written that the key is "whether the prospective juror can assure us that they will set aside any personal feelings or biases and render a decision that is based on the evidence and the law."

The trial amounts to a historic courtroom reckoning for Trump, whose norm-shattering presidency was shadowed from start to finish by investigations and who now faces four separate indictments charging him with crimes ranging from hoarding classified documents to plotting to overturn an election.

Yet the political stakes are less clear given that a conviction would not preclude him from becoming president and because the allegations in this case have been known to the public for years and are seen as



Former President Donald Trump arrives at Manhattan criminal court with his legal team on Monday in New York. It's a singular moment for American history as the first criminal trial of a former U.S. president.

less grievous than the conduct behind the three other cases against him.

No matter the outcome, Trump is looking to benefit from the proceedings, presenting himself as the victim of politically motivated prosecutions designed to derail his candidacy. He's lambasted judges and prosecutors for years, a pattern of attacks that continued up to the moment he entered court on Monday, when he said: "This is political persecution. This is a persecution like never before."

Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records.

Prosecutors say he was trying to conceal an alleged effort to keep salacious-and, he says, bogus-stories about his sex life from emerging during his 2016 campaign.

The charges center on \$130,000 in payments that Trump's company made to his then-lawyer, Michael Cohen. He had paid that sum on Trump's behalf to keep porn actor Stormy Daniels from going public, a month before the election, with her claims of a sexual encounter with the married mogul a decade earlier.

Prosecutors say the payments to Cohen were falsely logged as legal fees to cloak their actual purpose. Trump's lawyers say the disbursements indeed were legal expenses, not a cover-up. Trump himself casts the case, and his indictments elsewhere, as a broad "weaponization of law enforcement" by Democratic prosecutors and officials. He maintains they are orchestrating sham charges in hopes of impeding his presidential run.

## House Speaker Johnson says he will push for aid to Israel and Ukraine

#### Associated Press

day he will try to advance wartime aid for Israel this week as he attempts the difficult task of winning House approval for a national security package that also includes funding for Ukraine and allies in Asia.

Johnson, R-La., is already under immense political pressure from his fellow GOP lawmakers as he tries to stretch between the Repu-

WASHINGTON — House helping Kyiv defend itself from the urgency of approving the fund- said that President Joe Biden helda Speaker Mike Johnson said Sun- Moscow's invasion. The Republi- ing. can speaker has sat for two months on a \$95 billion supplemental package that would send support to the U.S. allies, as well as provide humanitarian aid for civilians in Ukraine and Gaza and funding to replenish U.S. weapons provided to Taiwan.

The attack by Iran on Israel early Sunday further ratcheted up the pressure on Johnson, but also gave

blican Party's divided support for him an opportunity to underscore Schumer at a news conference also

Johnson told Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" that he and Republicans "understand the necessity of standing with Israel" and he would try this week to advance the aid.

"The details of that package are being put together right now," he said. "We're looking at the options and all these supplemental issues." Senate Majority Leader Chuck phone call Sunday with the top Re- House of Representatives to pass publicans and Democrats in the House and Senate, including Johnson. The New York Democrat said there was consensus "among all the leaders that we had to help Israel and help Ukraine, and now hopefully we can work that out and get this done next week."

"It's vital for the future of Ukraine, for Israel and the West," Schumer said.

The White House said Biden "discussed the urgent need for the the national security supplemental as soon as possible."

Johnson has also "made it clear" to fellow House Republicans that he will this week push to package together the aid for Israel, Ukraine and allies in Asia and pass it through the House, said GOP Rep. Mike Turner of Ohio, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, on NBC's "Meet the Press."

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## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

#### Lawmakers send bill to ban first-cousin marriages

**TN** NASHVILLE — The Republican-led Tennessee Legislature has overwhelmingly voted to send GOP Gov. Bill Lee a proposal that would ban marriage between first cousins.

The House cast a 75-2 vote on the bill after the Senate previously approved it without any opposition.

But a particularly vocal opponent, Republican Rep. Gino Bulso, took up most of the debate time, as he argued for an amendment to allow first-cousin marriages if the couple first seeks counseling from a genetic counselor.

The socially conservative attorney argued that the risk of married cousins having a child with birth defects does not exist for gay couples. He contended there is no compelling government interest to ban same-sex cousins from getting married.

## Man arrested for allegedly taking inactive fireboat

NEW YORK — A man was arrested for allegedly taking a decommissioned New York City fireboat for an overnight cruise on the Hudson River, before becoming stuck, jumping ship and stealing another vessel, police said.

He was charged with two counts of grand larceny, officials said.

The man commandeered the fireboat, known as the John J. Harvey, by untying it from its mooring at Pier 66 off the west side of Manhattan, according to authorities. The 130-foot-long vessel, which now serves as a museum, earned local acclaim after it was used to evacuate survivors of 9/11.

Once aboard the fireboat, the man was able to drift a short distance into the Hudson River, police said, but quickly got stuck. He leapt overboard, plunging into the frigid waters and later emerging on a second stolen vessel, according to police. The department's Harbor Unit arrested the man on the sailboat's deck.

#### Teen sentenced in bonfire blast that burned others

MAPLE GROVE — An 18-year-old who triggered a bonfire explosion that injured more than a dozen people at a backyard gathering in eastern Wisconsin has been sentenced to a year in jail and five years probation.

Sam Armstrong appeared in Shawano County Court, WLUK-TV reported.

Armstrong pleaded no contest in February to 13 counts of injury by negligent use of an explosive. A no-contest plea is not an admission of guilt but is used as such at sentencing.

Armstrong was attending a bonfire on Oct. 14, 2022, with other



WILLIAM WOTRING, THE (MORGANTOWN, W.VA.) DOMINION-POST/AP

## Swinging your saber

Tesh and Jeff Norton of Outer Rim Praxeum have a lightsaber duel during StoryFest on Saturday, in Morgantown, W.Va.

teenagers in Maple Grove, about 25 miles northwest of Green Bay, when he threw a barrel containing a mix of gasoline and diesel into the fire, sparking an explosion that burned at least 17 of the roughly 60 youths who were there, authorities have said.

He told police he didn't know his actions would cause an explosion and injure anyone, according to a criminal complaint. Armstrong told investigators he had been drinking beer.

## Prison official charged for taking \$219K in bribes

**SC** COLUMBIA — A supervisor who managed security at a South Carolina prison accepted more than \$219,000 in bribes over three years and got 173 contraband cellphones for inmates, according to federal prosecutors.

Christine Mary Livingston, 46, was indicted on 15 charges including bribery, conspiracy, wire fraud and money laundering.

Livingston worked for the South Carolina Department of Corrections for 16 years. She was promoted to captain at Broad River Correctional Institution in 2016, which put her in charge of security at the medium-security Columbia prison, investigators said.

Livingston worked with an inmate, Jerell Reaves, 33, to accept bribes for cellphones and other contraband accessories. They would take \$1,000 to \$7,000 over the smart phone Cash App money transfer program for a phone, according to the federal indictment unsealed.

#### Vote OKs Oakland airport name adjustment

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — Oakland officials have voted in favor of changing the name of the city's airport to San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport, despite San Francisco threatening a lawsuit over what it said is a trademark violation.

The Board of Commissioners for the Port of Oakland voted unanimously to move forward with the name-change and scheduled a second vote for final approval on May 9. The airport is currently called Oakland International Airport.

Oakland airport officials have said travelers unfamiliar with the region fly into San Francisco's airport even if their destination is closer to the Oakland airport across the Bay. Modifying the name to San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport will change that, they said. The airport's three-letter code OAK would not change.

## Firms to halt sales as part of 'ghost guns' suit

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — Two of America's leading gun parts manufacturers have agreed to temporarily halt sales of their products in Philadelphia and elsewhere in Pennsylvania, city officials said, announcing a settlement of their lawsuit against the companies.

Philadelphia filed suit against Polymer80 and JSD Supply in July, accusing the manufacturers of perpetuating gun violence in the city by manufacturing and selling untraceable, self-manufactured weapons commonly known as "ghost guns."

Under the settlement, JSD Supply, based in Butler, Pa., agreed it would no longer sell its products in the state for four years, city officials said. JSD-owned Eagle Shows, which bills itself as Pennsylvania's largest gun show, will be required to prohibit vendors from selling such gun parts for two years.

Dayton, Nev.,-based Polymer80 agreed to a four-year ban on sales to customers in Philadelphia and nearby counties. Additionally, Polymer80 agreed to pay \$1.3 million, which Philadelphia officials said will fund efforts to address gun violence.

## Uber, Lyft delay plans to leave as pay plan set back

MINNEAPOLIS — The ride-hailing companies Uber and Lyft said they will delay their planned exit from Minneapolis after city officials decided to push back the start of a driver pay raise by two months.

The Minneapolis City Council voted unanimously to implement the ordinance on July 1 instead of May 1.

Some council members said this gives other ride-hailing companies more time to establish themselves in the market before Uber and Lyft potentially leave, and it gives Minnesota lawmakers a chance to pass statewide rules on pay for ride-hailing drivers.

Under the ordinance, ride-hailing companies must pay drivers at least \$1.40 per mile and \$0.51 per minute — or \$5 per ride, whichever is greater — excluding tips, for the time spent transporting passengers in Minneapolis.

## Goddard College to close after years of struggles

PLAINFIELD — Vermont's Goddard College, a small school known for its progressive education, is closing after years of declining enrollment and financial struggles, the board of trustees announced.

The decision to close at the end of the semester was heartwrenching but unavoidable as the school, created in 1938, faces financial insolvency, the board said in a statement.

Goddard currently has 220 students, compared with more than 1,900 in the early 1970s, the board said. 第3種郵便物認可

## **Biden hosts Iraqi leader as Mideast tensions soar**

## US troop presence among topics raised

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Monday hailed the "unprecedented military effort to defend Israel" on Monday as he hosted Iraq's leader at the White House and his administration aims to prevent an escalation in Mideast hostilities following Iran's weekend attack.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani was visiting the White House for talks intended to focus primarily on U.S.-Iraq relations, which had been scheduled well before the Iranian strikes. But Saturday's drone and missile launches, including some that overflew Iraqi airspace and others that were launched from Iraq by Iran-backed groups, have underscored the delicate relationship between Washington and Baghdad.

The sharp increase in regional tensions over Israel's war in Gaza and the weekend developments have raised further questions about the viability of the two-decade American military presence in Iraq. However, a U.S. Patriot



Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani met with President Joe Biden and other U.S. officials Monday.

battery in Irbil, Iraq, did shoot down at least one Iranian ballistic missile, according to American officials, one of dozens of missiles and drones destroyed by U.S. forces alongside Israeli efforts to defeat the attack.

Speaking at the start of the meeting in the Oval Office, Biden reinforced that the U.S. remains "committed to Israel's security.

"Our partnership is pivotal for our nations, the Middle East and the world," Biden told al-Sudani, as the Iraqi leader noted the discussion comes at a "sensitive time." Meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Tamim before Biden's session with al-Sudani, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. was urging all parties to avoid escalation.

"In the 36 hours since, we have been coordinating a diplomatic response to seek to prevent escalation," he said. "Strength and wisdom need to be different sides of the same coin."

Tamim said the Iraqi government was equally concerned.

"The Middle East today is living in exceptional circumstances that have repercussions on our nations, and we hope escalations and tensions in the area will end," he said.

Complicating matters, Iranian proxies have initiated attacks against U.S. interests throughout the region from inside Iraq. Those ongoing strikes have made U.S.-Iraq discussions about regional stability and future U.S. troop deployments all the more critical.

Monday's talks would also focus on economic, trade and energy issues that have become a major priority for Iraq's government. Biden praised al-Sudani for strengthening Iraq's economy. The Iraqi leader also pressed Biden on working to bring a swift end to the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, now in its seventh month, saying the economic dialog couldn't ignore the humanitarian needs in the region. Biden, for his part, said the U.S. was "committed to a cease-fire that will bring the hostages home and prevent the conflict from spreading."

The U.S. and Iraq began formal talks in January about ending the coalition created to help the Iraqi government fight the Islamic State, with some 2,000 U.S. troops remaining in the country under an agreement with Baghdad. Iraqi officials have periodically called for a withdrawal of those forces.

The two countries have a delicate relationship due in part to Iran's considerable sway in Iraq, where a coalition of Iran-backed groups brought al-Sudani to power in October 2022.

The U.S. in recent months has urged Iraq to do more to prevent attacks on U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria that have further roiled the Middle East in the aftermath of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Iran's weekend attacks on Israel through Iraqi airspace have further underscored U.S. concerns, although al-Sudani had already left Baghdad and was en route to Washington when the drones and missiles were launched.

The U.S. has also sought to apply financial pressure over Baghdad's relationship with Tehran, restricting Iraq's access to its own dollars in an effort to stamp out money laundering said to benefit Iran and Syria.

Most previous Iraqi prime ministers have visited Washington earlier in their tenure. Al-Sudani's visit was delayed because of tensions between the U.S. and Iran and regional escalation, including the Gaza war and the killing of three U.S. soldiers in Jordan in a drone attack in late January. That was followed by a U.S. strike that killed a leader in the Kataib Hezbollah militia whom Washington accused of planning and participating in attacks on U.S. troops.

Al-Sudani has attempted to maintain a balancing act between Iran and America despite being seen as being close to Tehran and despite several incidents that have put his government in an embarrassing position in relation to Washington.

# <image>

## **Philippines: No plans** to give US access to more military bases

#### By AARON FAVILA Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines-The Philippine president said Monday his administration has no plan to give the United States access to more Philippine military bases and stressed that the American military's presence in several camps and sites so far was sparked by China's aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in 2022, allowed American forces and weapons access to four additional Philippine military bases, bringing to nine the number of sites where U.S. troops can rotate indefinitely under a 2014 agreement.

The Biden administration has been strengthening an arc of security alliances in the region to better counter China, a move that dovetails with Philippine efforts to shore up its external defense, especially in the South China Sea.

Marcos' decision last year alarmed China because two of the new sites were located just across from Taiwan and southern China. Beijing accused the Philippines of providing American forces with staging grounds, which could be used to undermine its security.

"The Philippines has no plans to create any more bases or give access to any more bases," Marcos said, without elaborating in response to a question during a forum with Manila-based foreign correspondents.

Asked if he was concerned that allowing the U.S. military access to Philippine bases had provoked Chinese actions in the South China Sea, Marcos said the presence of U.S. troops was in response to China's moves.



**Philippine President Ferdinand** Marcos Jr. previously allowed American forces and weapons access to four additional Philippine military bases.

"These are reactions to what has happened in the South China Sea, to the aggressive actions that we have had to deal with," he said, mentioning Chinese coast guard vessels using water cannons and lasers to deter Philippine ships from the area Beijing claims as its own.

Last week, President Joe Biden renewed Washington's "ironclad" commitment to defend Pacific allies in a White House summit with Marcos and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. He reiterated that the U.S. is obligated to defend the Philippines if its forces, aircraft or ships come under an armed attack.

## Bishop, 3 others stabbed during worship in Sydney

#### Associated Press

SYDNEY - Horrified worshipers watched online and in person as a bishop was stabbed at the altar during a church service in Sydney on Sunday, and three others were stabbed as people rushed to help. Police said there were no lifethreatening wounds, and a man was arrested.

Hundreds of angry people hurried to the Orthodox Assyrian church and some clashed with riot police, with vehicles damaged. The church and local leaders pleaded for calm. "A large police response is underway and the public is urged to avoid the area," police said.

The Christ the Good Shepherd in suburban Wakely streams sermons online, and a video on social media shows a man dressed in black approaching a cleric identified as the bishop and appearing to stab him repeatedly in the head and upper body. Members of the congregation are seen screaming and rushing to stop it. The church identified the bishop as Mar Mari Emmanuel.

Authorities did not immediately

report a motive. Australians were still in shock after a lone assailant stabbed six people to death in a Sydney shopping mall on Saturday and injured more than a dozen others. There was no immediate indication the two stabbings were linked.

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The church in a message on social media said the bishop and a senior priest, Isaac Royel, were in stable condition at a hospital and asked for people's prayers. "It is the bishop's and father's wishes that you also pray for the perpetrator," the church's statement said. "We also kindly ask anyone at the churchpremises to leave in peace."

The bishop was featured in national news last year. A video posted in May 2023 by the Australian Broadcasting Corp. about a campaign targeting the LGBTQ+ community showed the bishop in a sermon saying that "when a man calls himself a woman, he is neither a man nor a woman, you are not a human, then you are an it. Now, since you are an it, I will not address you as a human anymore because it is not my choosing, it your choosing."

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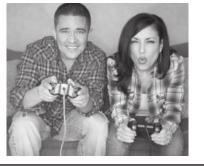
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## FACES

## 'Civil War' conquers box office

#### By LINDSEY BAHR Associated Press

Alex Garland's provocative "Civil War" didn't only ignite the discourse. The film also inspired audiences to go to the cinemas over the weekend, where it surpassed expectations and earned \$25.7 million in ticket sales in North America, according to studio estimates Sunday.

It's the biggest R-rated opening of the year to date and a record for A24, the studio behind films like "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and "The Iron Claw."

"Civil War" also unseated "Godzilla x Kong" from its perch atop the box office. The titan movie from Warner Bros. had held the No. 1 spot for the past two weekends.

"Civil War" stars Kirsten Dunst, Wagner Moura and Cailee Spaeny as front-line journalists in the near future covering a devastating conflict in the U.S. and trying to make their way to Washington, D.C.

The story, written by Garland, who is also the mind behind "Ex Machina" and "Annihilation," imagines a U.S. in which California and Texas have united against a president who has disbanded the FBI and given himself a third term.

Though entirely fictional, "Civil War" has been inspiring debates since the first trailer.

Going into the weekend, projections pegged the film to debut in the \$15 to \$24 million range.

"The title alone is enough to spark a conversation in a year where the political discourse is top of mind," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "And they couldn't have picked a better date. This movie is perfectly timed in a month that is very quiet."

The film is the most expensive movie that the studio has ever made, with a production budget of \$50 million, which does not account for millions spent on marketing and promotion.

Second place went to "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire," which earned \$15.5 million in its third weekend to bring its running domestic total to nearly \$158 million. Sony's "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire" took third place in its fourth weekend with \$5.8 million. It's now at \$160 million worldwide.

Rounding out the top five was Universal and DreamWorks' "Kung Fu Panda 4," in fourth with \$5.5 million in weekend six, and "Dune: Part Two" with \$4.3 million in its seventh weekend. "Dune 2" has now earned \$272 million domestically.



Tori Kelly, who released a new album April 5, says she's trying to live in the moment after a health scare.

# **Music for the hard times**

## Tori Kelly says recent blood clot health scare influenced new album

By VIVIAN KWARM New York Daily News

Tori Kelly is back with a new album, tour and "feelgood" music after a recent health scare landed her in the hospital.

On April 5, the Grammy winner released her new self-titled album "TORI," which she says was in part influenced by her "crazy" medical emergency.

"I had this crazy health scare back in July. And so that was like a whirlwind," Kelly said. "This happened so suddenly and was super scary for myself, and my friends and family. Everyone was like, 'What in the world?' Thankfully, I had these incredible doctors."

After completing the album last summer, the singer-songwriter says the unexpected hospitalization was an "overwhelming time" that inspired her to write her new single, "High Water."

"That song is so layered for me," she said.

"I'm really diving deep into this harder place, and coming out on the other side of it with hope. And I think I decided to name [the album] 'TORI' for that very reason."

She added, "That health scare really prompted me to write a song that I would have wanted to listen to while I was going through that hard time."

In July 2023, the "Dear No One" singer collapsed at dinner and was rushed to the hospital where doctors discovered blood clots around her lungs and in her legs.

It came as a shock to Kelly, who still doesn't quite know what caused it.

"The doctors didn't necessarily know why. All I know now is that I'm feeling great and healthy and on the other side of it."

Thankfully, Kelly had a speedy recovery and says she's just "grateful for life." The "Nobody Love" singer feels "amazing" and says fans can expect a "burst of energy" on her North American concert tour, which began last week.

"While I was in the studio, I was already picturing the live versions of all the songs. I've just been ready to hit the road. I think it's a lot more energy than my previous tours."

As for her health scare's impact on her personal life, Kelly says, "I think I'm really trying to live in the moment more and not take anything or anyone for granted. I think I'm holding my people a little closer."

She added: "Life is life is fragile, you know? There's certain things we really don't have control over. And I just want to make sure I'm living in a way that I can I can look back and be proud of it."

Lloyd Webber's "Sunset Bou-

levard," three decades after

the musical's 1990s debut.

Her co-star Tom Francis won

the corresponding best actor

#### **Eminem earns 10th** billion-streaming song

Eminem has notched his 10th song in Spotify's Billions Club with "The Monster," his 2013 collaboration with Rihanna.

The song, from Em's "The Marshall Mathers LP 2," passed the 1 billion streams marker on the streaming service last week. It's his second song from the album to earn 1 billion streams, following "Rap God," and his second collaboration with Rihanna to reach the 1 billion marker, after their 2010 smash "Love the Way You Lie."

"The Monster" topped Billboard's Hot 100 singles chart for four weeks at the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. On You-Tube, the song's video has been viewed 929 million times, and in March 2022 it was certified eighttimes platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America.

The track, co-written by Bebe Rexha, finds Eminem confronting his relationship with fame, while Rihanna sings the song's chorus. The pair won a Grammy Award for the song, for best rap/sung collaboration, in 2015.

Eminem previously hit 1 billion streams with his songs "Stan," "Mockingbird," "Godzilla," "The Real Slim Shady," "Lose Yourself," "'Till I Collapse" and "Without Me."

"The Monster" is Rihanna's 14th song to pass 1 billion streams on Spotify.

#### 'Golden Bachelor' pair announces divorce

The first "Golden Bachelor" couple, Gerry Turner and Theresa Nist, said they're calling it quits after three months of marriage.

The pair announced their divorce in a "Good Morning America" interview April 12, explaining that it was best for them and their families that they live apart. Turner, who lives in Indiana, and Nist, who's based in New Jersey, had planned to move in together after getting hitched in a whirlwind wedding in January.

Five weeks after Turner proposed to Nist on the show's season finale, the two were married in a glamorous ceremony in California, televised live on ABC.

From wire reports

## 'Sunset Boulevard,' Scherzinger win big at Olivier awards

#### **By JILL LAWLESS** Associated Press

A radical restaging of Hollywood film noir musical "Sunset Boulevard" was the big winner on Sunday at the London stage Olivier Awards, taking seven trophies including best musical revival and best actress for American star Nicole Scherzinger.

Soccer-themed state-of-the-nation drama "Dear England" was named best new play, while Sarah Snook ("The Picture of Dorian Gray") and Mark Gatiss ("The Motive and the Cue") were among the acting winners.

Scherzinger was rewarded for her perfor-



Scherzinger

prize as a struggling screenwriter fatefully drawn into Desmond's orbit.

Jamie Lloyd took the directing trophy for the technically innovative production, which melds live video with the onstage action and also won Oliviers for sound and lighting design.

mance as fading silver screen It's due to open in New York later this year.

star Norma Desmond in a The prize for best new musical went to "Opflashy revival of Andrew eration Mincemeat," a word-of-mouth hit based on an audacious real-life espionage operation that deceived the Nazis during World War II. The show began life in a tiny theater in 2019 and has moved to progressively larger venues, gathering accolades along the way.

"Stranger Things: The First Shadow," a dazzlingly staged prequel to the Netflix supernatural series, was named best new entertainment or comedy.

The Oliviers are the U.K. equivalent of Broadway's Tony Awards.

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## Now it's up to Israel: De-escalate or retaliate?

**By Max Boot** The Washington Post

isaster was narrowly averted on Saturday night in the long-standing conflict between Israel and Iran. Israel, aided by the United States and other allies, successfully repelled a massive Iranian drone and missile strike. But the reprieve might be short-lived.

The latest round of hostilities began Oct. 7, when Hamas, a terrorist organization funded and armed by Iran, launched a barbaric attack on Israel. Israel responded by first bombing and then invading the Gaza Strip. Six months later, Israeli forces continue to battle Hamas in Gaza, with Palestinian civilians suffering devastating damage as Hamas hides among them.

Iran did not launch a full-scale war of its own after Oct.7, despite what must have been Hamas leaders' hopes, but Iran's proxies in Hezbollah opened steady rocket and missile fire from southern Lebanon into northern Israel, forcing roughly 60,000 Israelis from their homes. The Houthis, another Iranianbacked militia, began attacking international shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Other Iranian-backed militia opened fire on U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria. While U.S. forces retaliated against Iranian proxies for attacks on U.S. bases, Israel has kept up a series of strikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon while also continuing to target Hezbollah's Iranian supply lines in Syria.

On April 1, Israel upped the ante by bombing the Iranian consulate in Damascus. The dead included two senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) generals and several other officers. This airstrike was no doubt intended to put pressure on Iran to end the Hezbollah attacks on Israel, but this public humiliation — which included the destruction of a diplomatic facility that is technically sovereign Iranian territory — backed the mullahs into a corner. From Tehran's perspective, retaliation became necessary to save face both with its own public and with its regional allies.

In the past two weeks, there was a public debate in Tehran about how to calibrate a response that would show strength against the "Zionist entity" but not drag Iran into a broader war with Israel and its allies. Israel had plenty of warning and so did the United States; President Joe Biden even returned to the White House on Saturday afternoon from his home in Delaware to be ready to address the assault he had warned Iran not to launch.

On Saturday night, the Iranian attack finally materialized: Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles against Israel. This was the first time that the Islamic Republic had directly attacked the Jewish state; normally Iran prefers to operate through terrorist proxies. But while Iran's attack was large and unprecedented, it had little chance of success in the face of Israel's multilayered air defenses, buttressed by support from the United States, Jordan, Britain, France and other friendly states. Israel announced that 99% of the Iranian projectiles were intercepted, and the damage was minimal.

The mullahs must have known that this would be the likely outcome. This attack was reminiscent of the Iranian missile strike on two U.S. bases in Iraq after the U.S. killing of the IRGC's Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in early 2020, which also inflicted no fatalities — and prompted no U.S. retaliation. Both attacks were performative acts designed to make a statement, not to inflict mass casualties.



Yuki Iwamura/AP

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan shows a video of Iranian missiles flying over AI-Aqsa Mosque as he addresses the United Nations Security Council during an emergency meeting at U.N. headquarters on Sunday.

On Saturday, the Iranians could have tried to overwhelm Israel air defenses by directing Hezbollah to unleash its arsenal of some 150,000 missiles. Given Hezbollah's geographical proximity to Israel, the flight times would have been short and Israel would have had little time to prepare. But that's not what the mullahs did. They opted for an attack launched mainly from Iranian soil, giving Israel and its allies plenty of time to activate their own defenses.

The Iranians are no more eager for a bigger war with Israel than Israel is eager for a bigger war with Iran. Both sides prefer to wage a low-intensity conflict, as they have been doing for many years: Iran sponsors terrorist attacks against Israel by its "axis of resistance," while Israel launches covert actions against Iran's nuclear program and airstrikes against Iranian operatives in Syria and Lebanon. But, however much the two sides want to avoid a larger conflict, they could still stumble into one if the action-reaction cycle spins out of control.

Nowit's up to Israel's war Cabinet to decide whether to strike back against Iran. The pressure to respond would have been much greater if the Iranian attack had caused mass casualties. That didn't happen, lessening the pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to do something rash.

Indeed, in many ways the attack was a defeat for Iran. It gave the appearance that Israel's military is strong enough to defend the country against Iran, and it reduced Israel's international isolation after more than six months of brutal war in Gaza. Even nations that have been calling on Israel to implement a cease-fire and lessen civilian suffering rallied to its side on Saturday. House Republicans now say they will rush a floor vote on long-delayed military aid to Israel. (Given that Ukraine is also under regular air attack — often from Russia's Iranian-made drones — it would be a travesty if the aid bill did not include Ukraine.)

If he were so inclined, Netanyahu could chalk up the exchange as a win for Israel and for his embattled government. Or he could use the attack as a perfect excuse to bomb Iran's nuclear program or other Iranian military installations. Iran has signaled its desire to de-escalate: Even before Iran's drones and missiles had reached Israel on Saturday night, its mission to the United Nations had written on X that "the matter can be deemed concluded." Biden, for his part, reportedly told Netanyahu in a Saturday phone call that the United States won't support an Israeli counterstrike on Iran. But Israel's defense minister said on Sunday that the confrontation is "not over yet."

The decision now rests with Netanyahu and the Israeli war Cabinet. Israel would be fully justified morally and legally in ordering airstrikes on Iran. But it wouldn't be smart strategically. Iran is a nation of 88.5 million people, while Israel is nation of just 9.5 million. Iran has more than half a million activeduty military personnel, a sophisticated defense industry and a vast network of powerful proxies across the region. Israel can hurt Iran, but it can't defeat Iran—or even destroy its well-hidden and well-fortified nuclear program. It doesn't even have heavy bombers such as B-52s capable of carrying the largest bunker-busting munitions.

Even the United States would be hard-put to defeat Iran, and the Biden administration rightly has no desire to get dragged into a war with the Islamic Republic that would be likely to lead to a spike in oil prices and a global economic downturn. Biden is urging restraint on Netanyahu. But will he listen now when he has so often ignored Biden's pleas in the past?

Israel was lucky to escape serious harm in the latest Iranian attack. It may not be so lucky next time. The prudent step now would be to avoid escalation, which could embroil the entire region in a calamitous conflict. Israel would be better advised to focus on ending the war in Gaza rather than widening it. More can be done to stymie Iran's regional designs if Israel draws closer to the Arab states that are also enemies of Iran than if it blindly retaliates. But emotions are running high on both sides, and the risks of miscalculation are growing.

Max Boot is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. A Pulitzer Prize finalist in biography, he is the author of the forthcoming "Reagan: His Life and Legend."

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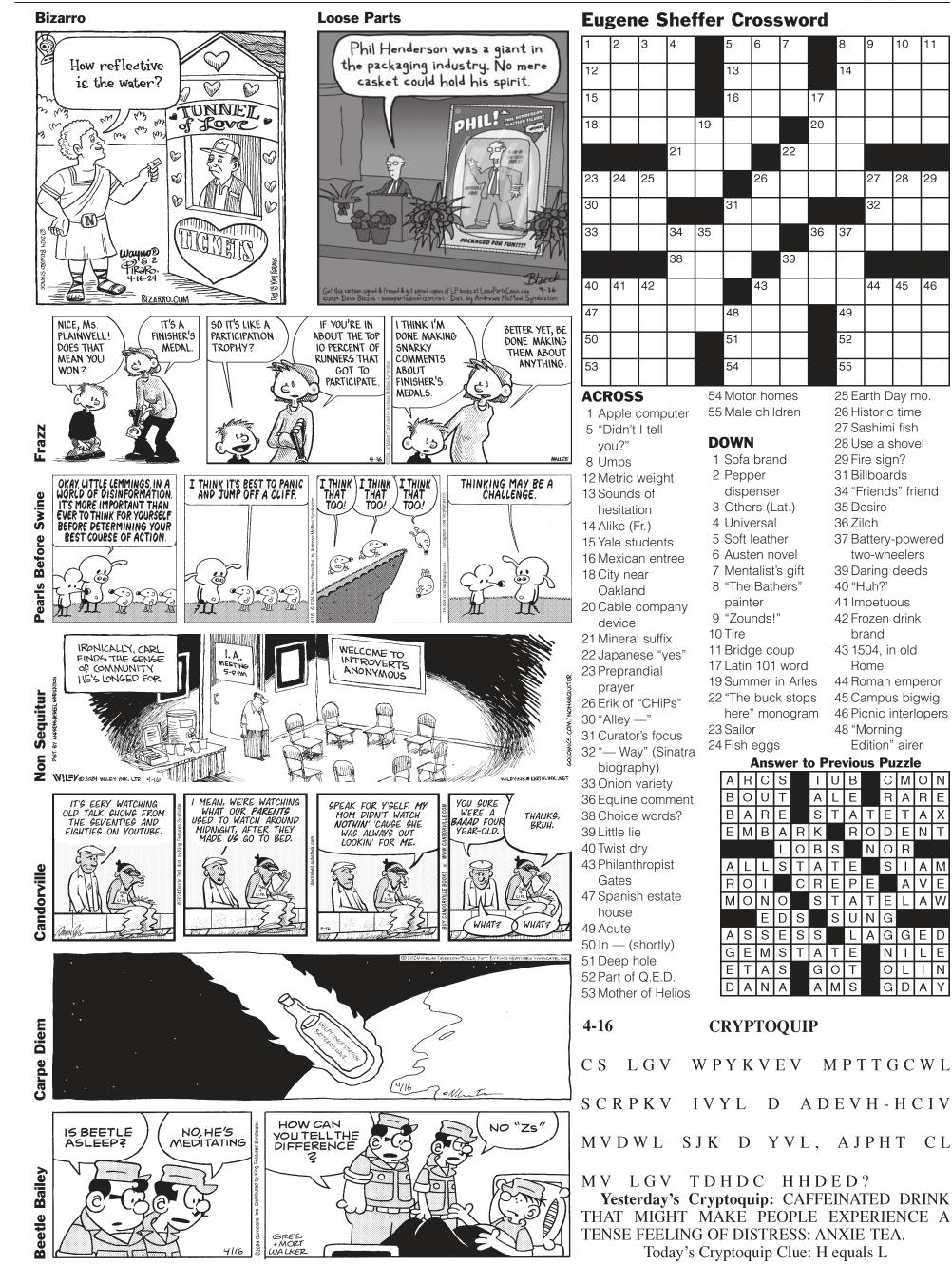
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#### **PAGE 17**

## SCOREBOARD/OLYMPICS

#### AUTO RACING

**AutoTrader EchoPark** Automotive 400 **NASCAR Cup Series** Sunday Sunday At Texas Motor Speedway Fort Worth, Texas Lap length: 1.50 miles (Start position in parentheses) (24) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 276 laps,

45 points (22) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 276, 40 2. (22) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 276, 40. 3. (6) William Byron, Chevrolet, 276, 36. 4. (4) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, 276, 40. 5. (17) Daniel Suárez, Chevrolet, 276, 32. 6. (5) Chase Briscoe, Ford, 276, 43. 7. (10) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 276, 40. 8. (15) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 276, 28. 9. (35) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 276, 28. 10. (16) Carson Hocevar, Chevrolet, 276, 76,

(16) Gui son Hoce Val., Orley 216, 77.
 (20) Joey Logano, Ford, 276, 26.
 (26) Ryan Preece, Ford, 276, 25.
 (2) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 276, 26.
 (4) Martin Truex Jr, Toyota, 276, 23.
 (15) Chris Buescher, Ford, 276, 22.
 (36) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 276, 0.
 (30) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 276, 29.
 (21) Noah Gragson, Ford, 276, 25.
 (23) Caniel Hemric, Chevrolet, 276, 19.
 (23) Corey LaJoie, Chevrolet, 276, 76.
 (23) Corey LaJoie, Chevrolet, 276, 15.
 (23) Christy Stenhouse Jr, Chevrolet, 76, 17.

27

 (31) Ricky Stennouse Jr, Chevrole 276, 17.
 (32) Justin Haley, Ford, 276, 13.
 (8) Austin Cindric, Ford, 276, 12.
 (18) Zane Smith, Chevrolet, 276, 11.
 (33) Kaz Grala, Ford, 276, 10.
 (34) Marricon Burton Ford, 276, 12. 27. (33) Kaz Grala, Ford, 276, 10. 28. (29) Harrison Burton, Ford, 276, 13. 29. (37) Jimmie Johnson, Toyota, 276, 8. 30. (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 276, 15. 31. (28) Todd Gilliand, Ford, 276, 6. 32. (12) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, acci-dent, 275, 15. 33. (7) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 268, 17. 34. (30) John H. Nemechek, Toyota, acci-dent, 276, 3.

dent, 226, 3. 35. (13) Michael McDowell, Ford, acci-dent, 143, 5.

36. (25) Josh Berry, Ford, accident, 136, 1. 37. (14) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, acci-ent, 100. 1.

dent, 100, 1. 38. (34) Austin Hill, Chevrolet, garage, 98, 0.

**Race statistics** Average speed of race winner: 116.488

mph. Time of race: 3 hours, 33 minutes, 14 sec-

Margin of victory: Under Caution. Caution flags: 16 for 72 laps. Lead changes: 23 among 13 drivers. Lap leaders: K.Larson 0-35; T.Gibbs 36-40; C.Elliott 41-52; K.Larson 105; F.S. Eell 55; K.Larson 56-84; R.Blaney 85-87; A.Hill 88; R.Blaney 89-99; K.Larson 100; R.Blaney 101-103; T.Gilliland 104-106; K.Larson 107-116; D.Hamlin 117-138; R.Chastain 139-167; B.Wallace 168-172; H.Burton 173-179; T.Reddick 180-213; R.Chastain 214-217; J.Logano 218-231; T.Reddick 232-234; C.El-liott 235-244; D.Hamlin 245-259; C.Elliott 260-276 260-276

Ilott 235-244; D.Hamlin 245-259; C.Elliott 250-276
 Leaders summary (driver, times led, laps led); K.Larson, 5 times for 77 laps; C.Elliott, 3 times for 39 laps; T.Reddick, 2 times for 37 laps; D.Hamlin, 2 times for 37 laps; R.Chastain, 2 times for 33 laps; R.Blaney, 3 times for 17 laps; J.Logano, 1 time for 14 laps; H.Burton, 1 time for 7 laps; B.Wallace, 1 time for 1 laps; T.Gibls, 1 time for 5 laps; T.Gilliland, 1 time for 1 lap, 4 Wars: W.Byron, 3; D.Hamlin, 2; K.Larson, 1; C.Bell, 1; D.Suårez, 1.
 Top 16 in points: 1. K.Larson, 309; 2.
 M.Truex, 295; 3. D.Hamlin, 227; 4. W.Byron, 261; 5. R.Blaney, 261; 6. C.Elliott, 258; 7.
 T.Gibbs, 254; 8. R.Chastain, 232; 9. T.Reddick, 229; 10. A.Bowman, 227; 11. C.Bell, 221; 12. B.Wallace, 161; 15. K.Busch, 189; 16.
 C.Briscoe, 188.

#### **AP SPORTLIGHT**

- The Boston Bruins beat Toronto 1939 Maple Leafs 3-1 in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Finals in Boston, winning the series 4-1. It was the first best-of-seven Finals se-

April 16

**1940** — Bob Feller of Cleveland defeats the White Sox 1-0 in Chicago in the only opening day no-hitter in the major

1949 — The Toronto Maple Leafs win 3-1 to sweep the Detroit Red Wings for the second straight year in the Stanley Cup Finals

1953 — The Montreal Canadiens beat the Boston Bruins 1-0 for a 4-1 series win in the Stanley Cup Finals in Montreal. **1954** – The Detroit Red Wings edge the Montreal Canadiens 2-1 in the seventh game to win the Stanley Cup. **1957** – The Montreal Canadiens beat the

Boston Bruins 5-1 to take the Stanley Cup Boston Bruins 5-1 to take the Stanley Cup in five games. **1958** — Arnold Palmer edges Doug Ford by one stroke to capture the Masters. **1961** — The Chicago Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup in six games with a 5-1 tri-umph over the Detroit Red Wings. **1978** — The Cardinals' Bob Forsch no-hits the Philadelphia Phillies 5-0 in St. Louis.

Louis. **1980** — Arthur Ashe retires from professional tennis.

**1983** — Steve Garvey sets a National League record by playing in 1,118 consecutive games.

League record by playing in 1,118 consec-utive games. **1987** — Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls scores 61 points in a 117-114 loss to the Atlanta Hawks and becomes the sec-ond player to surpass the 3,000-point mark in a season. **1989** — Costa Rica beats the United States 1-0 in the third round of the 1990

Monte Carlo Rolex Masters Sunday At Monte Carlo Country Club Monte Carlo, Monaco Purse: Euro 5,950,575 Surface: Red Clay Maria Eiroloa Men's Singles Championship Stefanos Tsitsipas (12), Greece, def. Casper Ruud (8), Norway, 6-1, 6-4. <u>Men's Doubles</u> Championship

TENNIS

Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen, Belgium, def. Marcelo Melo, Brazil, and Alexander Zverev, Germany, 5-7, 6-3, 10-5. DEALS

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Returned RHP Wes Parsons to Columbus (IL). DETROIT TIGERS – Sent RHP Matt Man-

ning to Toledo (IL). HOUSTON ASTROS – Sent C Cooper Hummel outright to Sugar Land (PCL). MINNESOTA TWINS — Reinstated LHP Caleb Thielbar from the 15-day IL. Op-

Caleb Inielbar from the 15-day IL. Op-tioned RHP Jorge Alcala to St. Paul. Sent RHP Simeon Woods Richardson to St. Paul. **NEW YORK YANKEES** — Sent RHP Cody Poteet to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). **TEXAS RANGERS** — Placed LHP Cody Bradford on the 15-day IL, retroactive to April 11. Recalled RHP Cole Winn from Round Rock (PCL).

April 11. Recarco Round Rock (PCL). National League

MILWAUKEE BREWERS – Recalled OF Joey Wiemer from Nashville (IL). Selected the contract of LHP Jared Koenig from Nashville. Optioned INF Andruw Monasterio to Nashville. Placed RHP JB Bukauskas on the 15-day IL. Transferred OF Garrett Mitchell to the 60-day IL. Claimed RHP Corbin Martin off waivers from Arizona. Des-ignated RHP Kevin Herget for assignment. **NEW YORK METS** — Recalled RHPs Jose

(IL). Optioned RHP Cole Sulser and LHP Tyler Jay to Syracuse. Sent RHP Sean Reid-Foley on a rehab assignment to Brooklyn

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES – Reinstated Orion Kerkering from the 15-day IL. Op-tioned RHP Nick Nelson to Lehigh Valley

PITTSBURGH PIRATES - Placed LHP Marco Gonzales on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Ryder Ryan from Indianapolis (IL). WASHINGTON NATIONALS – Optioned

RHP Amos Willingham to Rochester (IL). BASKETBALL National Basketball Association

**GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS** – Converted the contract of F Usman Garuba to an NBA

contract LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS — Signed C Kai Jones to a rest-of-season contract. **PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS** – Signed G

Taze Moore to a 10-day contract. HOCKEY

National Hockey League OTTAWA SENATORS – Sent C Matthew Highmore to Belleville (AHL). SAN JOSE SHARKS – Recalled RW Danil Gushchin and Ds Jack Thompson and Ge-orgii Romanov from San Jose (AHL). TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS – Signed D Ni-colas Mattinon to a one-way

colas Mattinen to a one-year, two-way contract.

WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Recalled Ds Dylan McIlrath and Lucas Johansen from Hershey (AHL).

World Cup. **1990** – Gelindo Bordin becomes the first Olympic men's champion to win the Bos-ton Marathon. The Italian finishes in

ton Marathon. The Italian finishes in 2:08:19. Rosa Mota of Portugal wins the women's division in 2:25:24.
1991 — The St. Louis Blues become the eighth team in NHL playoff history to come back from a 3-1 deficit, beating the Detroit Red Wings 3-2 in the seventh game.
1995 — Raymond Floyd wins the PGA Seniors' Championship by 5 strokes.
2000 — Doug Tewell wins the first of two Champions Tour major titles by winning the PGA Seniors' Championship.
2011 — Lee Bong-ju of South Korea wins the Boston Marathon, ending a 10-year victory streak for Kenyan men. Kenya's Catherine Ndereba wins the women's Catherine Ndereba wins the women's

race. 2003 – The Anaheim Mighty Ducks beat the Detroit Red Wings 3-2 in overtime, making the Red Wings the first defending Stanley Cup winner in 51 years to be swept the following season in a four-game open-ing series

ing series. Ing series. 2003 — The Washington Wizards' Mi-chael Jordan plays his final NBA game. 2008 — Jason Kidd gets the 100th triple-double of his career with 27 points, 10 as-sists and 10 rebounds in Dallas' 111-98 vic-tere over New Orlogan

sists and 10 rebounds in Dallas' 111-98 vic-tory over New Orleans. **2013** — Two bombs explode in the crowded streets near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three people and injuring more than 270 in a bloody scene of shattered glass and severed limbs. Earlier in the day, Lelisa Desisa of Ethiopia wins the 117th edition of the marathon and Rita Jeptoo of Kenya takes the women's race. **2018** — Desiree Linden runs through icy rain and a near-gale headwind to win the Boston Marathon, the first victory for an American woman since 1985.

PRO SOCCER	

MLS EASTERN CONFERENCE						
LASIE	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Inter Miami CF	4	2	3	15	19	14
New York	4	1	3	15	11	7
Philadelphia	3	0	4	13	14	9
Columbus	3	1	4	13	10	7
Cincinnati	3	2	3	12	8	7
Atlanta	3	2	2	11	12	7
Charlotte FC	3	3	2	11	9	8
CF Montréal	3	3	1	10	10	14
Toronto FC	3	4	1	10	8	12
D.C. United	2	2	4	10	12	12
Chicago	2	3	3	9	11	14
NYCFC	2	4	2	8	7	9
Orlando City	2	3	2	8	8	13
Nashville	1	2	4	7	8	13
New England	1	5	1	4	5	13
WESTE	RN C	CON	FER	ENCE		
	W	L	т	Pts	GF	GA
LA Galaxy	4	1	3	15	17	12
Vancouver	4	2	1	13	15	9
Houston	4	2	1	13	9	7
Real Salt Lake	3	2	3	12	11	8
Colorado	3	2	3	12	13	12
LAFC	3	3	2	11	13	12
Minnesota	3	2	2	11	10	9
St Louis City	2	1	5	11	12	11
Sporting KC	2	2	4	10	14	13

Portland 2 3 3 9 16 16 13 7 Austin FC 2 3 3 9 11 Seattle 1 3 3 6 9 FC Dallas 1 4 2 5 6 10 San Jose 1 70 3 10 20

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

#### Saturday, April 13

Saturday, April 13 Los Angeles FC 2, Portland 2, tie Charlotte FC 3, Toronto FC 2 Orlando City 3, D.C. United 2 CF Montréal 2, Cincinnati 1 New York City FC 2, New England 0 Chicago 0, New York 0, tie Seattle 0, FC Dallas 0, tie Miami 3, Sporting Kansas City 2 Houston 2, Minnesota 1 Columbus 0, Real Salt Lake 0, tie LA Galaxy 3, Vancouver 1 Colorado 3, San Jose 0 Sunday's games Sunday's games

Philadelphia 2, Atlanta 2, tie St Louis City 1, Austin FC 0 Saturday's games

Cincinnati at Atlanta Cincinnati at Atlanta Portland at Columbus Nashville at Miami Orlando City at CF Montréal D.C. United at New York City FC New England at Toronto FC Real Salt Lake at Chicago Austin FC at Houston St Louis City at Sporting Kansas City FC Dallas at Colorado New York at Los Angeles FC Vancouver at Seattle **Sunday, April 21** Sunday, April 21

Minnesota at Charlotte FC San Jose at LA Galaxy

NWSL

	W	L	т	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	3	0	1	10	12	8
North Carolina	3	1	0	9	9	3
Washington	3	1	0	9	7	4
Chicago	2	1	1	7	5	3
Orlando	1	0	3	6	5	4
Bay FC	2	2	0	6	7	7
Gotham FC	1	1	1	4	2	2
San Diego	1	1	1	4	2	2
Louisville	0	0	4	4	4	4
Angel City	1	2	1	4	4	6
Houston	1	2	1	4	5	10
Seattle	1	3	0	3	4	6
Utah Royals FC	1	3	0	3	3	6
Portland	0	3	1	1	6	10

Friday, April 12

Washington 3, Houston 1 Orlando 1, Utah Royals FC 0 Saturday, April 13 North Carolina 2. Portland 0

for tie.

San Diego 0, Louisville 0, tie Angel City 1, Chicago 0 Sunday's games

Kansas City 1, Gotham FC 1, tie Bay FC 3, Seattle 2 **Friday's game** 

San Diego at Orlando Saturday's games

Gotham FC at Washington Utah Royals FC at Louisville Bay FC at Kansas City Houston at Portland

Sunday, April 21

Chicago at Seattle North Carolina at Angel City Friday, April 26

Orlando at Washington Kansas City at Angel City

AURELIEN MORISSARD/AP

Stands are constructed at Champ-de-Mars, which will host Beach Volleyball and Blind Football at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

# **Opening ceremony** may switch venues

#### Security threat could shift event to Stade de France

**By SAMUEL PETREQUIN** Associated Press

French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday said the opening ceremony for the Paris Olympics planned on the River Seine could be shifted instead to the Stade de France if the security threat is deemed too high.

France is on high security alert ahead of the Paris Olympics and Paralympics, which are expected to draw millions of visitors to the country.

Security concerns are notably high for the the exceptional opening ceremony, which involves boats carrying athletes along the Seine on a 3.7-mile parade and huge crowds watching from the embankments.

Speaking to French media BFM-TV and RMC, Macron said France's law enforcement forces will be mobilized at an exceptional level for the security of the openair event.

"But if we think there are risks, depending on our analysis of the context, we have fallback scenarios," Macron said. "There are plan Bs and plan Cs."

The July 26 event is set to be the first Olympic opening ceremony held outside a stadium setting. About 10,500 athletes will parade through the heart of the French capital on boats on the Seine along the route ending in front of the Trocadéro.

To limit security risks, Macron said organizers could decide to shorten the itinerary of the parade on the Seine, and even to "repatriate the ceremony to the Stade de France" for a more conventional opening event.

Organizers had originally planned a grandiose opening ceremony for as many as 600,000 people, most watching free of charge from riverbanks. But security and logistical concerns have led the government to progressively scale back its ambitions. Earlier this year, the overall number of spectators was reduced to around 300.000.

The French government also decided that tourists won't be given free access to watch the opening ceremony because of security concerns. Free access will be invitation-only instead.

Macron insisted that, for now, plans for the opening ceremony remain the same. "It's a world first. We can do it

and we will do it," the French

France has repeatedly been hit

by deadly Islamic State attacks,

including the Bataclan theater

massacre in 2015 in which extre-

mists opened fire on concert-

goers and held hostages for hours.

French troops have also fought

against Islamic extremists in the

Last month, the French govern-

ment increased its security alert

posture to the highest level after

the deadly attack at a Russian con-

cert hall and the Islamic State's

Macron said that security pe-

rimeters will be installed "days,

even weeks" before the opening

ceremony. He added that road

traffic in the high-security zone

will be brought to a standstill, and

that French authorities will use

"drone systems, coding, cyber

protection," in their safeguarding

Answering to a viewer who ex-

pressed concerns about her son at-

tending the opening ceremony,

Macron said "If there's one place

where your son will be safe, it's

Associated Press reporter Barbara Surk in Nice

Middle East and Africa.

claim of responsibility.

efforts.

here."

contributed to this report.

President said.

## HOCKEY

#### **NHL ROUNDUP**

# Knights score 4 late, top Avs in OT

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Tomas Hertl, who earlier had a goal wiped out because of goaltender interference, scored on a power play 1:23 into overtime as the Vegas Golden Knights rallied from three goals down to defeat the Colorado Avalanche 4-3 on Sunday.

"Maybe it was karma," Hertl said.

The Knights trailed 3-0 after two periods, but forced overtime when William Karlsson scored twice and Ivan Barbashev once. Karlsson's second goal, his 30th of the season and fifth in six games, came with 3:37 left in regulation. Adin Hill made 21 saves.

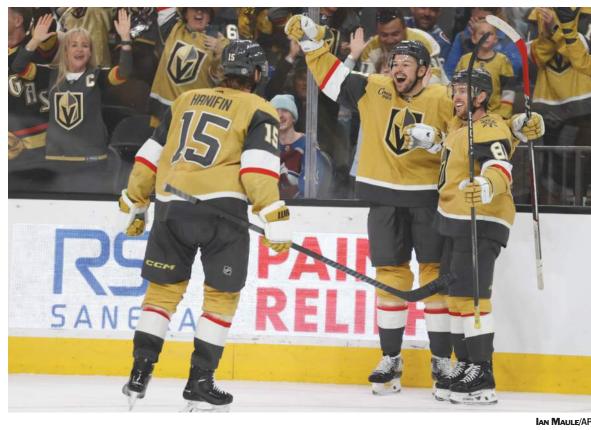
The Knights outshot Colorado 13-2 in the third period and overtime.

"It would've been easy tonight to say, 'Let's build our game and do some things in the third that are good and then worry about our next one," Knights coach Bruce Cassidy said. "It's good that they pushed back. I think that will help the group collectively as we go into the playoffs. If we're in this position, this is the one we'll look back and say, 'Hey, you're never out of it.""

Vegas took advantage of an Avalanche team playing the second of a back-to-back. They lost 7-0 to Winnipeg on Saturday in Denver, and have been defeated in five of their past seven games.

Blues 4, Kraken 1: Jordan Kyrou, Brayden Schenn and Nathan Walker scored in the third period, leading host St. Louis to a victory over Seattle.

Kasperi Kapanen also scored



From left, Golden Knights defenseman Noah Hanifin, center Tomas Hertl and right wing Jonathan Marchessault celebrate after Hertl's winning goal against the Colorado Avalanche on Sunday in Las Vegas.

for St. Louis. Joel Hofer made 19 saves and hiked his record to 15-12-1

Jared McCann scored a goal for the Kraken and Joey Daccord made 25 saves as his record slipped to 18-18-11.

Hurricanes 4, Blackhawks 2: Seth Jarvis scored two powerplay goals in the third period, and visiting Carolina beat Chicago for its fifth consecutive victory.

Jordan Staal also scored for Carolina (52-22-7), which stayed alive in the race for the Metropolitan Division title. Sebastian Aho added an empty-netter, and Andrei Svechnikov had two assists.

The Hurricanes moved within one point of the idle New York Rangers for the top spot in the division. Each team has one game left on its schedule.

Flames 6, Coyotes 5: Nazem Kadri scored twice in the third period, and also had an assist, as host Calgary rallied to beat Arizona.

Andrei Kuzmenko, Matt Coronato, Connor Zary, and Yegor Sharangovich also scored for Calgary, which has won three of its last four games. Dustin Wolf finished with 30 saves to win his third straight start.

Dylan Guenther had two goals, and Alex Kerfoot, Matias Maccelli, and Josh Doan also scored for Arizona, which was swept in the three-game season series with the Flames. Clayton Keller had two assists.

#### NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference								
	GP	W	L	ОТ	Pts	GF	GA	
x-N.Y. Rangers	81	54	23	4	112	278	229	
x-Carolina	81	52	22	7	111	276	210	
x-Boston	80	47	18	15	109	266	219	
x-Florida	81	51	24	6	108	263	198	
x-Toronto	80	46	24	10	102	297	252	
x-Tampa Bay	80	44	28	8	96	283	260	
m-N.Y. Islanders	80	37	27	16	90	237	258	
Washington	80	38	31	11	87	216	256	
Detroit	80	39	32	9	87	268	266	
Philadelphia	81	38	32	11	87	234	259	
Pittsburgh	80	37	31	12	86	247	244	
Buffalo	81	38	37	6	82	242	242	
New Jersey	81	38	38	5	81	263	279	
Ottawa	80	36	40	4	76	252	276	
Montreal	80	30	36	14	74	228	279	
Columbus	81	26	43	12	64	231	297	

GP W         L         OT Pts         GF GA           y-Dallas         81         51         21         9         111         296         233           x-Vancouver         80         49         22         9         107         273         218           x-Vancouver         80         49         22         9         107         273         218           x-Winnipeg         80         50         24         6         106         251         194           x-Colorado         81         49         25         7         105         299         253           x-Edmonton         79         48         25         6         102         282         225           x-Nashville         81         47         29         5         99         267         244           x-Los Angeles         80         43         26         11         97         250         208           x-Vegas         80         44         28         96         263         240           St. Louis         81         43         33         5         91         238         248           Minnesota         80         3	Western Conference								
x-Vancouver         80         49         22         9         107         273         218           x-Winnipeg         80         50         24         6         106         251         194           x-Colorado         81         49         25         7         105         299         253           x-Edmonton         79         48         25         6         102         282         225           x-Nashville         81         47         29         5         99         267         244           x-Los Angeles         80         43         26         11         97         250         208           x-Vegas         80         44         28         8         96         263         240           St. Louis         81         43         33         5         91         238         248           Minnesota         80         38         39         85         245         258           Calgary         80         37         38         5         79         247         266           Seattle         80         33         41         3         79         210         229 </th <th></th> <th>GP</th> <th>w</th> <th>L</th> <th>ОТ</th> <th>Pts</th> <th>GF</th> <th>GA</th>		GP	w	L	ОТ	Pts	GF	GA	
x-Winnipeg       80       50       24       6       106       251       194         x-Colorado       81       49       25       7       105       299       253         x-Edmonton       79       48       25       6       102       282       225         x-Los Angeles       80       43       26       11       97       250       208         x-Vegas       80       44       28       8       96       263       240         St. Louis       81       43       33       5       91       238       248         Minnesota       80       38       39       85       245       255         Calgary       80       37       38       5       79       247       266         Seattle       80       33       41       3       79       210       229         Arizona       81       35       41       5       75       251       272         Anaheim       81       26       5       57       200       294         Chicago       80       23       52       5       51       174       282	y-Dallas	81	51	21	9	111	296	233	
x-Colorado         81         49         25         7         105         299         253           x-Edmonton         79         48         25         6         102         282         225           x-Nashville         81         47         29         5         99         267         244           x-Los Angeles         80         43         26         11         97         250         208           x-Vegas         80         44         28         8         96         263         240           St. Louis         81         43         33         5         91         238         248           Minnesota         80         38         39         85         245         258           Calgary         80         37         38         5         79         247         266           Seattle         80         33         413         79         210         229           Arizona         81         35         41         5         75         251         272           Anaheim         81         26         5         57         200         294           Chicago         <	x-Vancouver	80	49	22	9	107	273	218	
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San Jose 80 19 52 9 47 178 317	Chicago	80	23	52	5	51	174	282	
	San Jose	80	19	52	9	47	178	317	

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each di-vision and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs. x-clinched playoff spot y-clinched division z-clinched conference (a, c, m, p)-top three in their division

Sunday's games

St. Louis 4, Seattle 1 Vegas 4, Colorado 3, OT Carolina 4, Chicago 2 Calgary 6, Arizona 5 **Monday's games** 

Boston at Washington Buffalo at Tampa Bay Montreal at Detroit NY. Islanders at New Jersey Nashville at Pittsburgh Ottawa at N.Y. Rangers Minnesota at Los Angeles San Jose at Edmonton **Tuesday's games** 

Carolina at Columbus Detroit at Montreal Ottawa at Boston Washington at Philadelphia Toronto at Florida Seattle at Winnipeg Calgary at Vancouver Chicago at Vegas

## Serdachny, Canada defeat US in women's world final

#### By JOHN WAWROW Associated Press

UTICA, N.Y. - Slowed by an injury entering the women's world hockey championships, it seemed only a matter of time for Marie-Philip Poulin - aka, Canada's Captain Clutch-to make her presence felt.

That moment came Sunday, with Poulin scoring twice in a breathtaking 6-5 overtime win over the United States that has the gold medal returning to Canada for a tournamentrecord 13th time.

"I hate to say you're not trying to rely on it, expect it, but I know I've grown to expect it," Canada coach Troy Ryan said. "Tonight was just a whole other level. I could see in her eyes every time we called her name that she was ready to go. It's just special."

In an outing sealed by Danielle Serdachny converting a rebound 5:16 into the extra period for a power-play goal, Poulin was the difference-maker in settling Canada in an outing filled with momentum shifts, three lead changes and neither team building more than a one-goal lead.

With the U.S. surging in the second period by scoring twice less than six minutes apart to



CHRISTINNE MUSCHI, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Canada goaltender Ann-Renee Desbiens hoists the trophy following their gold medal win over the United States at the women's world championship in Utica, N.Y., on Sunday.

build a 3-2 lead, Poulin tied the game by roofing a shot off the crossbar with 1:02 left in the period.

"Happy it happened today," said Poulin, who missed the final three games with her PWHL Montreal team leading up to the world

championship break. "You want to win and I'm competitive and that's part of it."

The 33-year-old Poulin earned her nickname with gold medal-clinching goals in two Winter Games and the 2021 world championships-each time against the U.S.

Canada got payback by beating the Americans on home soil in central New York a year after a 6-3 loss to the U.S., which won its 10th tournament outside of Toronto.

What also stood out was the relentless pace and back-and-forth intensity that was once again on display in the 36th tournament meeting between the world's top powers.

Poulin went so far as to search out U.S. captain Hilary Knight and give her a hug on the ice. "We just said, 'That was unbelievable," Poulin said.

And heart-breaking, from a U.S. perspective.

Though American defenseman Caroline Harvey had a goal and assist, she also had two pucks go in off her.

"No emotion. I mean, it's not the result we wanted," Harvey said. "Not what we came here for. Definitely very motivational. Pretty speechless at this point."

#### Scoreboard

MLB

Chicago

Ameri	can Lea	gue	
Eas	st Division	ı	
	w	L Pct	GB
New York	12	4 .750	_
Baltimore	9	6 .600	21⁄2
Boston	9	7.563	3
Tampa Bay	9	7.563	3
Toronto	8	8 .500	4
Cent	ral Divisio	on	
	w	L Pct	GB
Cleveland	10	5.667	_
Kansas City	10	6 .625	1⁄2
Detroit	9	6 .600	1
Minnesota	6	8.429	31⁄2

West Division					
	w	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	8	8	.500	_	
Los Angeles	7	8	.467	1/2	
Oakland	7	9	.438	1	
Seattle	6	10	.375	2	
Houston	6	11	.353	21⁄2	

National League

East	t Divisio	n	
	W	L Pct	GB
Atlanta	9	5 .643	_
Philadelphia	8	8 .500	2
New York	7	8.467	21⁄2
Washington	6	9.400	31⁄2
Miami	3	13 .188	7
Centr	al Divisi	on	
	w	L Pct	GB
Milwaukee	10	4 .714	_
Pittsburgh	11	5.688	_
Chicago	9	6 .600	11⁄2
Cincinnati	9	6.600	11⁄2
St. Louis	7	9.438	4
Wes	t Divisio	n	
	W	L Pct	GB
Los Angeles	11	7 .611	_
San Diego	9	9.500	2
Arizona	8	8 .500	2
San Francisco	6	10 .375	4
Colorado	4	12 .250	6

	Sunday's games	
N.Y. Me Detroit Toronto Baltimo Boston Housto Clevela Cincinn Chicag Oaklan Pittsbu Atlanta Arizona	Bay 9, San Francisco 4 ts 2, Kansas City 1 4, Minnesota 3 55, Colorado 0 ore 6, Milwaukee 4 5, L.A. Angels 4 n 8, Texas 5 nd 8, N.Y. Yankees 7, 10 inning ati 11, Chicago White Sox 4 0 Cubs 3, Seattle 2 d 7, Washington 6 rgh 9, Philadelphia 2 9, Miami 7 15, St. Louis 0 go 6, L.A. Dodgers 3	g
	Monday's games	
Minnes Colorad Texas a San Fra L.A. An N.Y. Ya Pittsbu Kansas San Die Atlanta	nd at Boston ota at Baltimore Jo at Philadelphia It Detroit It Detroit It Detroit Jels at Tampa Bay nkees at Toronto rgh at N.Y. Mets City at Chicago White Sox go at Milwaukee at Houston o Cubs at Arizona	

St. Louis at Oakland

Cincinnati at Seattle Washington at L.A. Dodgers

#### Tuesday's games

Texas (TBD) at Detroit (Mize 0-0) Minnesota (Paddack 0-0) at Baltimore (Rodriguez 2-0) Colorado (Gomber 0-0) at Philadelphia (Suárez 2-0) San Francisco (Hicks 2-0) at Miami (TBD) L.A. Angels (Soriano 0-2) at Tampa Bay (Civale 2-1) N.Y. Yankees (Rodón 1-0) at Toronto (Ki-kuchi 0-1) Cleveland (Bibee 1-0) at Boston (Whitlock 1-0) Pittsburgh (TBD) at N.Y. Mets (Quintana Kansas City (Singer 2-0) at Chicago White Sox (TBD) San Diego (Cease 1-1) at Milwaukee (Mi-ley 0-0) Atlanta (López 1-0) at Houston (Brown 0-2) Chicago Cubs (Hendricks 0-2) at Arizona Chicago Cubs (Hendricks 0-2) at Arizona (Henry 0-1) Cincinnati (Greene 0-1) at Seattle (Gil-bert 0-0) St. Louis (Lynn 0-0) at Oakland (Sears 1-1) Washington (Corbin 0-2) at L.A. Dodgers (TBD)

#### Calendar

April 27-28 – MLB World Tour: Houston vs. Colorado at Mexico City.

# **Guardians rally to stun Yankees in 10**

Associated Press

ROUNDUP

8

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13

CLEVELAND — The Guardians began their first homestand staring at the sky in awe. They ended it with a stunning show on the field.

First a total solar eclipse, then a remarkable comeback against the New York Yankees.

Cleveland capped a memorable opening week at Progressive Field on Sunday by scoring three runs in the 10th inning for an 8-7 win to salvage the finale of a three-game series against baseball's top team.

It's early, way too early to make any broad declarations about the Guardians. But at 10-5, and having won four of their first five series, they've already surpassed expectations while showing grit, togetherness and resilience.

"This whole homestand, we fought back," first-year manager Stephen Vogt said. "We're not going to quit. That's one of the things I heard the boys yelling on the way back up to the clubhouse, 'We don't quit! We don't quit!' And that's what this group is about."

After falling behind 7-5 in the top of the 10th and on the verge of being swept, the Guardians scratched and scrapped their way back, scoring three runs on a forceout, fielder's choice and sacrifice fly.

Not pretty. Just pretty effective. It's been quite a baptism for Vogt, whose first weeks as Cleveland's new manager have included a 7-2 road trip, late-inning comebacks, two extra-inning victories and a once-in-generations celestial event.

Orioles 6, Brewers 4: Jackson Holliday delivered his first big league hit in the seventh inning, then scored the tiebreaking run to help host Baltimore avoid a sweep with a victory over Milwaukee.

Holliday, baseball's top-ranked prospect, struck out in his first two at-bats and was 0-for-13 with nine Ks since his call-up before he came up with the Orioles down 4-3 in the seventh. With a man on first and no outs. Hollidav pulled a 99 mph offering from Abner Uribe (1-1) into right field for a single. Then the rookie infielder flashed his speed, barely making it from first to third on Gunnar Henderson's RBI single.

That was an important extra base, because it enabled Holliday to score and put the Orioles up 5-4 when Adley Rutschman bounced into a double play. Colton Cowser went deep the following inning for Baltimore's third solo homer of the day.

Pirates 9, Phillies 2: Andrew McCutchen hit his 300th home run, Jack Suwinski had a grand slam and visiting Pittsburgh beat Philadelphia to gain a split of the



The Guardians' Andres Gimenez, right, celebrates with Gabriel Arias, left, after hitting a walk-off sacrifice fly in the 10th inning against the New York Yankees on Sunday in Cleveland. The Guardians won 8-7.

four-game series.

The 37-year-old McCutchen, who played for the Phillies from 2019-21, drove a Ricardo Pinto slider into the left-field seats in the ninth inning for his first home run this season. He became the 13th player with 2,000 hits, 400 doubles, 45 triples, 300 homers and 200 stolen bases.

Padres 6, Dodgers 3: Jurickson Profar broke a seventh-inning tie with a three-run double, Jackson Merrill had three hits and visiting San Diego defeated Los Angeles to take two of three in their weekend series.

Profar's bases-loaded drive off the center-field fence against J.P. Feyereisen (0-1) gave the Padres two straight series wins at Dodger Stadium for the first time since 2013.

Athletics 7, Nationals 6: Abraham Toro hit a go-ahead, two-run single in a six-run sixth inning. and host Oakland rallied from five runs down to beat Washington to win three straight series for the first time since 2021.

Oakland took two of three for the third straight series after going 4-2 on a trip to Detroit and Texas. The A's are 6-3 following a 1-6 start. They had not won three consecutive series since winning five in a row from May 31 to June 16, 2021

Blue Jays 5, Rockies 0: José Berríos and two relievers combined on a two-hitter, Justin Turner had three hits and three RBIs and host Toronto beat Colorado for its second shutout victory of the season.

Turner opened the scoring with

a two-out single in the first, doubled home a run in the third and added another two-out RBI single in the fifth, all against Rockies lefthander Kyle Freeland.

Rays 9, Giants 4: Amed Rosario and René Pinto homered off Blake Snell in his return to Tropicana Field, and host Tampa Bay beat San Francisco.

Snell (0-2) gave up seven hits, walked two and struck out four over four innings in his second start with San Francisco after signing a \$62 million, two-year contract that allows him to opt out after this season. The two-time Cy Young Award winner threw 48 of 78 pitches for strikes.

Red Sox 5, Angels 4: Masataka Yoshida hit his first homer of the season, one of three home runs by his team, and host Boston beat Los Angeles.

The designated hitter Yoshida hit his off reliever José Suarez in the sixth inning and scored a runner. Tyler O'Neill and Triston Casas hit back-to-back two-out homers in the first off left-hander Tvler Anderson (2-1).

Astros 8, Rangers 5: Jose Altuve homered off Nathan Eovaldi in his first two at-bats and Cristian Javier pitched seven strong innings to lead host Houston to a win over Texas.

After dropping the series opener 12-8, the Astros have won backto-back games following a 4-11 start that left them seven games under .500 for the first time since 2016. They improved to 4-3 against AL West rival Texas this season.

Reds 11, White Sox 4: Chris-

tian Encarnacion-Strand tied a career high with four RBIs, and visiting Cincinnati routed Chicago for a three-game sweep.

Chicago dropped to 2-13, the worst 15-game start in the franchise's 124-year history. The White Sox had 14 hits in the series and have scored a major leaguelow 34 runs.

Cubs 3, Mariners 2: Michael Busch homered for the fourth straight game, Javier Assad struck out six and visiting Chicago beat Seattle.

Reliever Adbert Alzolay picked off pinch-runner Julio Rodríguez to end the game after double plays ended two rallies.

Diamondbacks 5, Cardinals 0: Zac Gallen pitched six sharp innings and Corbin Carroll hit a tworun single in a five-run fifth to lead host Arizona over St. Louis.

Gallen (3-0) threw 90 pitches, giving up four hits and walking two. He struck out seven, two of them coming with a runner on third and one out.

Tigers 4, Twins 3: Mark Canha's two-run double highlighted a four-run eighth inning for host Detroit as it rallied to beat Minnesota.

Braves 9, Marlins 7: Marcell Ozuna hit a three-run homer off Tanner Scott with two outs in the ninth inning, and visiting Atlanta beat Miami to take two of three in the series.

Mets 2, Royals 1: Harrison Bader broke a scoreless tie with an infield single in the eighth inning and Edwin Díaz earned his first save at Citi Field since October 2022 as host New York edged Kansas City.

AUTO RACING/MASTERS

# Elliott snaps 42-race skid with victory in OT in Texas

#### By STEPHEN HAWKINS Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Chase Elliott had to get through a few extra laps after 18 months since last winning a race.

Elliott pulled ahead and cleared Ross Chastain on the first lap after the second restart in overtime Sunday at Texas Motor Speedway, ending a 42-race winless streak for NASCAR's most popular driver.

"A lot of things went on our way today. I'm not naive to that," Elliott said. "You have to be in the mix and you've got to be up front to even have things go your way. And we were close enough to do that."

The race ended on the 16th caution after Elliott had taken the white flag for the 276th lap in a race scheduled for 267 laps. Chastain got bumped from behind by defending race winner William Byron, who finished third and was just behind Brad Keselowski when the final yellow flag came out.

It was the fifth win this season for Hendrick Motorsports, the 306th for NASCAR's winningest team, but the first for Elliott in the No. 9 Chevrolet since Talladega in October 2022.

"The longer it goes and the more ways you find to either not run good or lose races, you know it can make it tougher," Elliott said. "It's been an extremely important thing to me ... to try to climb this mountain again together and try to get back to where we need to be as a group."

Elliott and Denny Hamlin were at the front of the field after a restart with two laps left in regulation, and they were racing all-out when Hamlin got loose on the outside going into Turn 4 and went hard into the wall, bringing out the 14th caution and sending the race to overtime.

"Trying go for the win ... got loose and spun out," said Hamlin, the only driver to lead laps in all nine races this season.

That was the second restart in the last 10 laps of regulation, with Hamlin leading on the previous one before Elliott edged ahead about the same time that another caution came out when polesitter Kyle Larson wrecked after a crowded four-wide jumble back in the field.

On the first restart in overtime, Elliott was on the inside and took a hard shove from Keselowski, but Harrison Burton was wrecked within a half lap.

In NASCAR's only stop this season at the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -mile Texas Motor Speedway, which for the first time in 20 years won't host a fall playoff



Chase Elliott celebrates with the trophy after winning the NASCAR Cup Series race at Texas Motor Speedway on Sunday.

race, there were 13 different leaders.

Keselowski has now gone 107 races since his last win at Talladega in April 2021, and still looking for his first win with RFK Racing, a team he co-owns.

"The driver in me is frustrated because I feel like these are races I am good enough to win but don't have the speed enough to do it," Keselowski said. "The owner in me is mad as hell because it is my fault for not making the cars faster."

Hamlin was the third driver to wreck when running second in the race, and all of those came in the same area of the track. Chastain became the fourth to crash from the No. 2 spot.

Michael McDowell was racing for the lead when he went through bumps in Turn 4 while on the outside of Chastain while racing for the lead on lap 142. The No. 34 Ford spun and slammed hard into the wall, and Chastain went on to win the second stage.

"It's my fault that I spun. It's not the track's fault," McDowell said.

Burton had taken the lead after going inside on lap 173 and getting three-wide off the backstretch with Bubba Wallace and Chase Briscoe, who were running up front after not pitting during the caution at the end of the second stage. Wallace got loose, moved up and made contact with Briscoe.

#### Larson's lost wheel

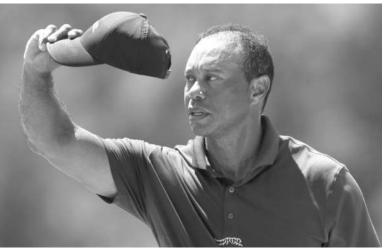
Larson won the first stage and led 77 laps before a lugnut came loose and the right rear wheel came off the No. 5 Chevrolet on lap 116. He had to serve a two-lap penalty after getting the wheel replaced, and went on to finish 21st. He led 99 laps at Texas last fall before spinning into the wall with 85 laps left.

#### Ford still winless

Ford had the last two Cup champions, but still doesn't have a win in its new Mustang this season.

#### **JJ** spins

Jimmie Johnson's spin out of the fourth turn onto the frontstretch on lap 50 brought out the first caution. The seven-time Cup champion, who now runs a very limited schedule, holds TMS records with seven wins and 1,152 laps. His 36th start at Texas was his first there in the No. 84 Toyota for the Legacy Motor Club team for which he is a co-owner.



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Tiger Woods waves after finishing his round at the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on Sunday. He was 16-over for the week.

## Woods finishes with highest score as a pro

#### By STEVE REED Associated Press

Associated Press AUGUSTA, Ga. — Tiger Woods finished the Masters on Sunday with a record he could do without, walking off the course with a 16over 304, his highest 72-hole score in a career that spans three decades.

Woods' previous high was 302 at the Memorial in 2015. He has only failed to break 300 one other time at the Masters two years ago when he shot 78-78 on the weekend and finished at 301.

Despite the score, Woods called it a "good week" and said he's going to begin preparing for the other three majors including the PGA Championship in May, the U.S. Open in June and the British Open in July.

"This is a golf course I knew going into it, so I'm going to do my homework going forward at Pinehurst, Valhalla and Troon," Woods said. "But that's kind of the game plan."

Overall, he wasn't unhappy with how he played.

"Coming in here, not having played a full tournament in a very long time, it was a good fight on Thursday and Friday," Woods said. "Unfortunately (Saturday) didn't quite turn out the way I wanted it to."

It hardly mattered to the crowd. The 48-year-old Woods, who is still dealing with the effects of numerous surgeries that have impacted his body and limited his playing time on the PGA Tour, received a huge roar from the crowd as he pitched close to the hole on No. 18 and made par.

Wearing his traditional Sunday red, Woods tipped his hat to the crowd.

Woods has played only 24 holes in one tournament going into the Masters

"I'm just going to keep lifting, keep the motor going, keep the body moving, keep getting stronger, keep progressing," Woods said. "Hopefully the practice sessions will keep getting longer." Woods was in last place among the 60 players who made the cut when he finished. The previous time he finished in last place was in the 2020 Genesis Invitational at Riviera.

Still, the patrons flocked to see the man who took golf's popularity to new heights, even if he isn't been the dominant player he once was at Augusta National.

Woods hasn't really been competitive here since 2020 when he finished tied for 38th one year after his stunning fifth victory at age 43.

He finished 13 over two years ago, then was forced to withdraw in 2023 in the third round due to injuries that weren't helped by the cold, rainy weather that had taken an obvious physical toll on his body.

For a short time this week Woods showed glimpses of past greatness, relying mostly on his knowledge of the course.

He played the first two rounds in 1 over to make the cut for a record 24th time. But the final two rounds were a struggle for Woods, who posted his worst round of his career at a major with an 82 on Saturday.

"It's always nice coming back here because I know the golf course, I know how to play it," Woods said. "I can kind of simulate shots. Granted, it's never quite the same as getting out here and doing it."

He played the final 36 holes in 15 over, shooting 77 on Sunday in his 100th career round at the Masters.

Before the round Woods appeared to receive some swing tips from his 15-year-old son Charlie on the practice range.

Things started off well enough, but that didn't last long.

After playing the first two holes in 1 under, Woods made a bogey on No. 3 before things started to unravel on the par-4 fifth hole when he took an unplayable lie and had to be driven back to the tee box in a golf cart to hit again. He wound up with a triple-bogey 7. MASTERS

#### Scoreboard

Sunday **At Augusta National** At Augusta, Rational Augusta, Ga. Purse: \$20 million Yardage: 7,555; Par: 72 Final Round Scotti Scheffler, \$3,600,000 66-72-71-68-277 -11

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Ludvig Aberg, \$2,160,000 73-69-70-69-281 72-71-72-69-284 T. Fleetwood, \$1,040,000 Max Homa, \$1,040,000 67-71-73-73-284 Collin Morikawa, \$1,040,000 71-70-69-74-284 B. DeChambeau, \$695,000 65-73-75-73-286 65-73-75-73-286 Cameron Smith, \$695,000 71-72-72-71–286 Xander Schauffele, \$620,000 72-72-70-73–287 Tyrrell Hatton, \$540,000 72-74-73-69-288 Cameron Young, \$540,000 Will Zalatoris, \$540,000 70-73-72-73-288 70-77-72-69-288 Cameron Davis, \$405,000 Matthieu Pavon, \$405,000 69-72-73-75-289 70-73-74-72-289 Adam Schenk, \$405,000 73-71-72-73-289 Patrick Reed, \$405,000 74-70-73-72-289 Byeong Hun An, \$310,000 70-73-72-75-290 Nicolai Hojgaard, \$310,000 Chris Kirk, \$310,000 67-73-74-76-290 +2 74-75-68-73-290 +2 Sepp Straka, \$310,000 73-71-74-72—290 Lucas Glover, \$250,000 Taylor Moore, \$250,000 71-73-72-75-291 +3 71-75-75-70-291 +3 Keegan Bradley, \$175,500 78-71-74-69-292 +4 71-75-70-76-292 +4 Patrick Cantlay, \$175,500 Harris English, \$175,500 72-74-75-71—292 +4 Matt Fitzpatrick, \$175,500 71-73-73-75-292 +4 74-74-75-69-292 +4 Min Woo Lee, \$175,500 Rory McIlroy, \$175,500 Adam Scott, \$175,500 71-77-71-73-292 +4 76-74-70-72-292 +4 Joaquin Niemann, \$175,500 70-78-71-73-292 +4 Jason Day, \$124,200 Rickie Fowler, \$124,200 75-73-76-69-293 +5 76-74-71-72-293 Si Woo Kim, \$124,200 Tom Kim, \$124,200 74-76-73-70-293 +5 72-78-77-66-293 +5 J.T. Poston, \$124,200 75-74-74-70-293 +5 Akshay Bhatia, \$103,000 Kurt Kitayama, \$103,000 72-75-74-73-294 +6 71-73-82-68-294 +6 Camilo Villegas, \$103,000 74-75-76-69-294 +6 Corev Conners, \$86,000 70-76-76-73-295 +7 Ryan Fox, \$86,000 69-74-77-75-295 Russell Henley, \$86,000 73-77-74-71-295 +7 Luke List, \$86,000 75-75-71-74-295 Hideki Matsuyama, \$86,000 76-74-71-74-295 +7 Shane Lowry, \$72,000 Phil Mickelson, \$72,000 73-74-75-74-296 +8 73-75-74-74-296 +8 Denny McCarthy, \$57,200 74-74-79-70-297 +9 Jose Maria Olazabal, \$57,200 77-73-75-72-297 +9 74-74-74-75-297 +9 Sahith Theegala, \$57,200 Danny Willett. \$57.200 68-75-76-78-297 +9 Brooks Koepka, \$57,200 73-73-76-75-297 +9 Jon Rahm, \$57,200 Grayson Murray, \$49,200 73-76-72-76-297 +9 76-74-78-70-298 +10 Eric Cole, \$48,000 73-72-81-73-299 +11 Adam Hadwin, \$47,200 75-73-82-70-300+12 71-76-80-73-300 +12 Neal Shipley, \$0 Tony Finau, \$46,000 71-78-72-80-301+13 Jake Knapp, \$46,000 74-76-78-73-301 +13 Erik Van Rooyen, \$46,000 71-76-78-76-301 +13 Thorbiorn Olesen, \$45,000 71-79-77-75-302 +14 Vijay Singh, \$45,000 Tiger Woods, \$44,000 75-73-82-72-302 +14 73-72-82-77-304+16

# **Amen Corner does in challengers**

#### BY DAVE SKRETTA Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Amen Corner brought Scottie Scheffler's closest pursuers to their knees on Sunday.

That famed three-hole stretch on the back nine at Augusta National, where history has so often been made in the Masters, is where Ludvig Aberg, Collin Morikawa and Max Homa put their prayers of winning into the water and the shrubs.

The trio had been briefly tied with Scheffler while he was playing the eighth hole in a final round fast building in drama. But the world's top player answered their challenge with three consecutive birdies, and each of them faltered: In a span of 10 minutes or so, Aberg and Morikawa found the water left of No. 11 and Homa hit into the bushes behind No. 12.

Each took a penalty stroke, made double bogey and watched his hopes of wearing a green jacket disappear.

By the time the shadows were growing long among the Georgia pines, each had had become a footnote. Scheffler was left with another Sunday stroll up No. 18 with a big lead, and he tapped in for a four-shot victory and his second Masters title.

Scheffler's final-round 68 left him 11 under for the championship. Aberg bounced back from his errant shot at the 11th with two birdies down the stretch and finished at 7 under. Homa and Morikawa joined Tommy Fleetwood in third at 4 under.

It was a disappointing ending to a memorable week for three players with something to prove.

Aberg arrived a relative unknown beyond the golfing establishment. The 24-year-old Swede won in Europe and the United States after turning pro last year, and he used a string of top-10 finishes, including a second at Pebble Beach, to climb to No. 9 in the world. For a while, it looked as if Aberg might make some



**GEORGE WALKER IV/AP** 

Max Homa looks for his ball in the shrubs along the back of the green on the 12th hole during Sunday's final round at the Masters in Augusta, Ga. Homa was forced to take an unplayable lie.

history by becoming the first Masters debutant since Fuzzy Zoeller in 1979 to win the year's first major.

Then came the par-4 11th, known as White Dogwood for its flowering trees. Aberg hit the fairway off the tee, but his approach from 207 yards bounced off the edge of the green and into the pond guarding the left-hand side.

Playing in the group behind Aberg was Morikawa, trying to capture the third leg of the career Grand Slam. After winning the PGA Championship in 2020 and the British Open the following year, the 27-year-old largely disappeared from the world stage, only to reappear at Augusta National with his game suddenly looking as good as ever.

Morikawa also hit the fairway at No. 11 and had 202 yards left to the green. His approach shot landed with a splash, and he said it was his fault for trying to hit the shot too close.

Then there was Homa, who endeared himself to fans all week with his quick wit and unvarnished honesty. He was trying to prove he could contend in the majors - his best finish had been a tie for 10th at the British Open a year ago.

His trouble came at the next hole, the par-3 12th known as Golden Bell, where he flew his tee shot to the back of the green and it onehopped into a shrub. Homa had to take an unplayable lie, left his chip on the collar of the green and eventually made double bogey.

## **Wins:** Scheffler is fourth-youngest player with 2 green jackets

#### FROM PAGE 24

Woods, meanwhile, closed with a 77 and finished in last place at 16-over 304, the highest 72-hole score of his career. This came two days after he set the Masters record for making his 24th consecutive cut.

The 27-year-old Scheffler is the fourthyoungest player to have two green jackets. He now has three victories against the strongest fields — Bay Hill, The Players Championship and the Masters — in his last four starts. The other was a runner-up finish in Houston.

Scheffler finished at 11-under 277 and earned \$3.6 million from the \$20 million purse.

Perhaps even more daunting for the rest of golf is that Scheffler now has 10 victories worldwide dating to his first PGA Tour title at the Phoenix Open just two years and two months ago.

During that stretch, Scheffler has finished in the top 10 a staggering 65% of the time.

It was the fourth straight Masters when the winner came to the 18th green with one arm in the green jacket. That doesn't mean Sunday was a walk in golf's most gorgeous garden.

"I felt like I was battling the whole week,"



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP Scottie Scheffler, left, celebrates his Masters win Sunday at Augusta National with caddie Ted Scott on the 18th green.

Scheffler said. "It was a long week. I had to battle some ups and downs. And, you know, I'm very fortunate to be sitting here with you."

Four players had a share of the lead at various points along the front nine, and then Scheffler began to assert himself with three straight birdies around the turn.

He got up-and-down with a 10-foot birdie putt at the par-5 eighth. He hit the perfect

wedge that caught the ridge and came inches within going in on No. 9, leaving him a tap-in birdie. And then he holed another 10foot birdie putt on the 10th to build a twoshot lead.

"I hadn't hit many good iron shots, which is a bit unusual for me," Scheffler said. "And going into No. 9, it was nice to get that feeling of hitting a really well-struck shot and then it set me up to have a really nice back nine."

And then, just like in the best days of Woods, he let everyone else make the big numbers.

In the group ahead, Aberg's approach to the 11th slammed off the bank and into the water, leading to double bogey.

Homa managed a tough par on the 11th, only to hit it so long over the par-3 12th the golf ball plunged deep into bushes and left him no choice but to take a penalty drop. His chip didn't reach the green, and two putts later he had double bogey.

Morikawa already had begun to slide by taking two shots to get out of a deep bunker left of the ninth green for double bogey. He all but sealed his fate with a shot into the water on the 11th and took double bogey.

Aberg was the only one who battled back, and Scheffler kept answering with birdies. He hit the 13th green in two and two-putted for birdie. His approach to the 14th hit the slope toward the back and rolled down to a foot from the pin.

His final birdie came from just inside 10 feet on the 16th.

Defending champion Jon Rahm, now with Saudi-funded LIV Golf, closed with a 76 and tied for 45th, 20 shots behind Scheffler. He was in Butler Cabin to help Scheffler into the green jacket.

Rahm had not faced Scheffler all year and witnessed what the PGA Tour players are up against each week. His tee-to-green play is reminiscent of Woods, though certainly not the emotion, the worldwide appeal or the number of victories.

Scheffler's emotions came when he thought about the next prize.

"You're about to make me cry here in Butler Cabin," Scheffler said when asked about the impending birth. "It's a very special time for both of us. I can't put into words what it means to win this tournament again. I really can't put into words what it's going to be like to be a father for the first time. I'm looking forward to getting home and celebrating with Meredith.

"Its been a long week here without her, but I'm just looking forward to getting home."

NBA

## Scoreboard Knicks clinch No. 2 seed in East

**By BRIAN MAHONEY** Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jalen Brunson didn't know where things stood around the NBA as the Knicks were deep into their final game of the regular season.

A win meant the No. 2 seed and a loss was going to keep them at No. 3. But Tom Thibodeau's team doesn't worry about who it plays next week. It just wants to beat the one in front of it that day.

"I think when you have competitors, it doesn't matter. Competitors compete," Thibodeau said.

That mentality drove Brunson to one of the best regular seasons in franchise history, which he capped with his 11th 40-point game to carry the Knicks into the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference with a 120-119 overtime victory over the Chicago Bulls on Sunday.

The Knicks finished 50-32, their best season since going 54-28 and also earning a No. 2 seed in 2012-13. They moved past Milwaukee after the Bucks lost earlier Sunday in Orlando, and will await the winner of the play-in game between Philadelphia and Miami on Wednesday.

"It's a goal to be the best team we can be by the end of the year, and for us now it's just move on from that," Brunson said. "It's something to be crossed off and have to get better from here.'

Brunson finished with 40 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, and tied Patrick Ewing for the second-most 40-point games in one season by a Knicks player. Hall of Famer Bernard King did it 13 times in 1984-85, when he set a franchise record with 32.9 points per game.



Knicks guard Jalen Brunson drives between Chicago Bulls guards DeMar DeRozan and Dalen Terry during the first half Sunday in New York. The Knicks won 120-119 in overtime.

Brunson finished up at 28.7, tying Carmelo Anthony for third. His 36 30-point games tied Richie Guerin (1961-62) and Ewing (1989-90) for the most in Knicks history.

Donte DiVincenzo added 25 points for the Knicks while playing all but 30 seconds of the 53minute game.

DeMar DeRozan scored 30 points for the Bulls, but one of the NBA's best clutch finishers missed a short jumper with 2.8 seconds remaining in OT. Nic Vucevic added 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Coby White scored 26 points.

Chicago finished ninth in the East at 39-43 and will host No. 10 Atlanta on Wednesday.

If they win that, the Bulls will have to beat the winner of the No.7 vs. No. 8 game on the road Friday to earn the No. 8 seed in the playoffs.

Despite having one of the only playoff scenarios that was determined going into the final day of the regular season, the Bulls opted to play their healthy players throughout the game, and DeRozan said he was angry about his missed shot that ultimately meant nothing to his team.

"Everybody out there wanted to win," DeRozan said. "So I don't know, it just felt like one of those games like we were playing for something, and we are."

Coach Billy Donovan said Ayo Dosunmu (bruised right quadricep) and Andre Drummond (sprained left ankle) were both still feeling pain and discomfort and was unsure if either would be ready for Wednesday's win-or-out game.

**Eastern Conference** L Pct w GB z-Boston 64 18 .780 x-New York 50 32 .610 y-Milwaukee 49 33.598 15 x-Cleveland 48 34 .585 16 y-Orlando 47 35 .573 17 x-Indiana 47 35 .573

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14

17

Philadelphia	47	35 .573	17
Miami	46	36 .561	18
Chicago	39	43.476	25
Atlanta	36	46.439	28
Brooklyn	32	50.390	32
Toronto	25	57 .305	39
Charlotte	21	61 .256	43
Washington	15	67 .183	49
Detroit	14	68 .171	50

Western Conference					
	w	L	Pct	GB	
z-Oklahoma City	57	25	.695	_	
x-Denver	57	25	.695	_	
x-Minnesota	56	26	.683	1	
y-L.A. Clippers	51	31	.622	6	
y-Dallas	50	32	.610	7	
x-Phoenix	49	33	.598	8	
New Orleans	49	33	.598	8	
L.A. Lakers	47	35	.573	10	
Sacramento	46	36	.561	11	
Golden State	46	36	.561	11	
Houston	41	41	.500	16	
Utah	31	51	.378	26	
Memphis	27	55	.329	30	
San Antonio	22	60	.268	35	
Portland	21	61	.256	36	

x-clinched playoff spot y-clinched division z-clinched conference

Sunday's games Sunday's games Charlotte 120, Cleveland 110 Boston 132, Washington 122 Philadelphia 107, Brooklyn 86 Indiana 157, Atlanta 115 Miami 118, Toronto 103 Orlando 113, Milwaukee 88 New York 120, Chicago 119, OT San Antonio 123, Detroit 95 Houston 116, L.A. Clippers 105 Oklahoma City 135, Dallas 86 Golden State 123, Utah 116 Sacramento 121, Portland 82 Denver 126, Memphis 111 Phoenix 125, Minnesota 106 L.A. Lakers 124, New Orleans 108 Monday's games Monday's games

No games scheduled.

**Play-in tournament** 

Tuesday's games L.A. Lakers at New Orleans Golden State at Sacramento Wednesday's games Miami at Philadelphia Atlanta at Chicago

## Suns beat Timberwolves to avoid play-in tournament

#### By DAVE CAMPBELL Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Bradley Beal scored 36 points on 6-for-6 shooting from 3-point range and the Phoenix Suns beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 125-106 on Sunday to stay out of the play-in tournament and set up a rematch in the first round of the NBA playoffs.

"It's a snapshot of what we look like when we can be at our best," Suns coach Frank Vogel said.

Devin Booker added 23 points and Grayson Allen had 20 points for the Suns (49-33). They built a 22-point lead by the end of the first quarter and never let the deficit drop into single digits after that.

"We've been playing well. Whether it's our best, we probably still don't know," Beal said. "I think we're definitely hitting our stride at the right time."

Phoenix finished the regular season on a 10-4 surge and seized



Phoenix Suns guard Bradley Beal, left, works around Minnesota Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards on Sunday in Minneapolis.

the No. 6 seed when New Orleans lost at home to the Los Angeles Lakers. The Suns held the tiebreaker over the Pelicans. After entering the final day in a threeway tie for the Western Conference lead with Denver and Oklahoma City, Minnesota took the No. 3 seed when the Nuggets and Thunder each won.

The Wolves will host Game 1 of the best-of-seven series next weekend. After losing all three games to the Suns this season, they've got a lot of work to do next week.

"We can't just look at the numbers or box scores and think that we can come out and just run through the series," Beal said. "It's going to be a tough grind-itout game every single night."

Rudy Gobert had 21 points and seven rebounds and Mike Conley scored 17 points for the Wolves, who matched their season worst with 24 turnovers and gave up 13 offensive rebounds to the Suns in this lackluster performance. They fell to 32-4 when shooting 50% or better.

Beal also took the lead in defending All-Star Anthony Edwards, who didn't make a shot in the second half and finished with 13 points.

"They were loading up on the

gaps. If he was able to punch a gap, there was a third guy right there, too. But he's got to find ways to be aggressive outside of that," Wolves coach Chris Finch said. 'He's got to play a little quicker."

The Timberwolves (56-26) still finished with the second-best record in their 35-year history, behind only the 2003-04 team led by league MVP Kevin Garnett that went 58-24 and lost to the Lakers in the conference finals.

The Suns, who held out sixth man Eric Gordon because of a migraine headache, served notice that they'll pose a fierce challenge in the first round for the Wolves, pestering them into poor decisions with the ball and checking the NBA's best defense with a hotshooting start.

"They play fast, and they have a lot of guys who make multiple reads and plays," Conley said. "We'll have to adjust and see where we go."

## NBA

# Familiar faces, foes kick off postseason

#### **By TIM REYNOLDS** Associated Press

LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers are back in the playin tournament. So is Stephen Curry, as he and Golden State will be fighting for their season. And Jimmy Butler returns as well, after this round last year was the first step on Miami's way to the NBA Finals.

The postseason — not technically the playoffs, yet — gets underway Tuesday with a pair of Western Conference matchups. The Lakers visit New Orleans with the winner securing the No. 7 seed and a series with defending champion Denver in Round 1. And then the Warriors go to Sacramento, an elimination game for both teams.

Golden State won a Game 7 at Sacramento last season to advance. The Warriors know Tuesday's game has Game 7-type consequences.

"It'll be a great atmosphere," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "We were there last year, obviously. They'll have their crowd behind them. It's nice to not get on a plane. So, we'll take the bus up there tomorrow, have a day to prepare and be ready to go."

The Eastern Conference takes the stage Wednesday: Philadelphia plays host to Miami in a game to decide the No. 7 seed, and Atlanta visits Chicago with the season on the line for those clubs.

"Look, this is the best time of year," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "These kind of environments, the games, the context ... you can't expect it to be easy."

Of the 20 postseason seeds, 15 were decided on Sunday, as were three of the four play-in matchups and three of the four first-round series that don't include play-in teams.

"Good momentum going into the playoffs," Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander said after his



Lakers forward LeBron James drives to the basket against Pelicans forward Zion Williamson on Sunday in New Orleans. The Lakers' win means the teams will play again on Tuesday in a play-in game.

team finished No. 1 in the West. "Nothing to complain about. ... We won a lot of basketball games. That's what it's all about. That's what everybody laces their shoes up for, to win basketball games and have a chance to win a championship."

Phoenix won at Minnesota on Sunday, and now will head back there for a Game 1 next weekend. "It's time now" Suns guard

"It's time now," Suns guard Bradley Beal said. "It starts now." The Lakers forced a rematch of Sunday's regular-season finale with a 128-104 victory in New Orleans that knocked the Pelicans out of the sixth seed. Now the Lakers expect the Pelicans to respond as if this were Game 2 of a playoff series.

"You win that first game and a team has multiple days to kind of sit on that feeling, sit with that taste in their mouth of defeat, so they're going to be extremely ready for us and we have to come in with the same sense of urgency," said the 39-year-old James, who is playing in his 21st NBA season.

The Lakers and Heat showed that the play-in can be a springboard to bigger and better things last year; the Lakers reached the Western Conference finals, the Heat reached the NBA Finals.

"We're not the same group as last year," Butler said. "We — I are very confident in the guys that we do have, and we know what we're capable of. We'll see what we got whenever the time gets here."

Golden State gets a short bus ride north for an elimination game against the Kings, on the same floor where the Warriors won a road Game 7 in Round 1 last season.

"We're happy to have a shot," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said.

So are the Kings, who had an upand-down season — but have a chance to vanquish the memory of falling in the playoffs to the Warriors a year ago.

"Let's frickin' go get it," Sacramento coach Mike Brown said.

next 36 hours and be

James' triple-double

was his fifth this season

and his playmaking

helped spearhead a

dominant performance

in the paint, where Los

Angeles outscored New



Los Angeles Lakers at New Orleans Pelicans AFN-Sports 1:30 a.m. Wednesday CET 8:30 a.m. Wednesday JKT



Golden State Warriors at Sacramento Kings AFN-Sports 4 a.m. Wednesday CET 11 a.m. Wednesday JKT



Miami Heat at Philadelphia 76ers AFN-Sports 1 a.m. Thursday CET 8 a.m. Thursday JKT



Atlanta Hawks at Chicago Bulls AFN-Sports 3:30 a.m. Thursday CET 10:30 a.m. Thursday JKT

## James forces Lakers-Pelicans play-in rematch

#### **By BRETT MARTEL** Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — LeBron James closed out his 21st NBA regular season looking invigorated, formidable on both ends of the court and ready to produce in the postseason.

James had 28 points, 17 assists, 11 rebounds and five steals, and the Los Angeles Lakers claimed the eighth seed in the Western Conference with a 124-108 victory over New Orleans on Sunday that dropped the Pelicans out of a coveted top-six seeding.

"I just want to win. So, whatever the game presents itself for me to be," said James, who also serves as a primary defender on Pelicans star power forward Zion Williamson. "I am a Swiss army knife. I've got to do it all on the floor, but none of it is predetermined." Anthony Davis had 30 points and 11 rebounds against the team that made him the first overall NBA Draft choice in 2012 to help set up a rematch on Tuesday night in the same arena in the

conference play-in. Davis, who asked out

of the game in the final minutes and walked gingerly back to the locker room holding his lower back, said his back "locked up" when he was shoved from behind while in the air, but added that his ailment was "nothing concerning."

"There's no doubt that I'm going to play" in Tuesday's play-in game, Davis said. "Get some massages, get some treatment, just keep it loose. Just see how I feel over the

#### "There's no doubt that I'm going to play."

Lakers' Anthony Davis on his availability for Tuesday

> Orleans 68-42. "They got whatever they wanted in the paint," Williamson said. "They dominated us in the paint."

ready."

James said he set out to "read the game and just find my teammates.

"Just try to put the ball on time and on target for either jump shots or guys at the rim," James added. "Just trying to be very efficient with my play."

James also helped hold Williamson, who

averages a Pelicans-leading 23 points per game, to 12 points.

"He's a beast. It's almost impossible to stop him," James said of Williamson. "So, just try to keep a body on him and just try to make it tough on him."

Williamson, meanwhile, criticized himself for "being too passive."

"I don't think I was super aggressive the whole game," he said.

Austin Reaves scored 20 points and D'Angelo Russell scored 19 for the Lakers, who won eight of their final 11 regular-season games.

CJ McCollum scored 23 for the Pelicans, who were coming off a four-game road winning streak and welcomed high-scoring wing Brandon Ingram back into the lineup, only to fall flat at home while trying to lock up a No. 6 seed and avoid the play-in.

## SPORTS Into the playoff bracket Suns top Timberwolves to avoid play-in tournament » NBA, Page 22 Scheffler wins 2nd Masters

## World's No. 1-ranked golfer unstoppable over final round

#### **By Doug Ferguson** Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. – Scottie Scheffler spent more time looking at his feet than any of the white leaderboards at Augusta National, all of them showing what everyone was watching - a Masters champion again, the undisputed best player in golf.

He prefers to stay in his own little world, population one.

Nobody is close to him in the game at the moment.

Scheffler is No. 1 in the world by a margin not seen since Tiger Woods in his prime. In nine tournaments this year, he doesn't have a round over par and has earned over \$15 million. And on Sunday, he delivered the greatest piece of evidence when he slipped into that green jacket.

Scheffler pulled ahead with magnificent shots around the turn, poured it on along the back nine as his challengers melted away with mistakes and closed with a 4-under 68 to claim his second Masters in three years with a four-shot victory.

"I had a lot of really talented players trying to chase me down, and I knew pars weren't going to get it done," Scheffler said.

Unlike two years ago when he won his first major, there were no doubts Sunday morning, no tears, and no wife to reassure him he was built for a moment like this. His wife, Meredith, was home in Dallas expecting their first child at the end of the month.

Scheffler made sure there was no drama, either.

Much like Woods he made the outcome look inevitable with sublime control, the difference being a peach shirt instead of Sunday red, and no fist pumps until it was over.

After sharing hugs with caddie Ted Scott and Collin Morikawa, Scheffler turned to face the crowd both arms raised. with "WOOOOOO!" he yelled, slamming his fist.

Masters newcomer Ludvig Aberg, among four players who had a share of the lead at one point, lost ground when his approach went into the pond left of the 11th hole and he made double bogey. Against a player like Scheffler, those mistakes are not easy to overcome.

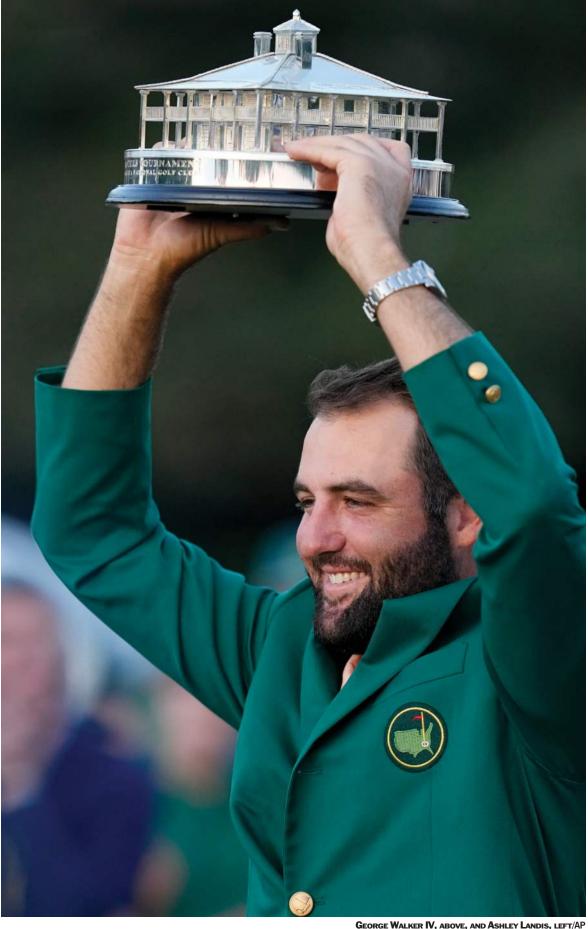
Aberg closed with a 69 and was the runner-up, not a bad debut for someone playing in his first major championship.

Morikawa, who had two double bogeys to fall out of the hunt, shot 74 and tied for third with Tommy Fleetwood (69) and Max Homa (73), whose hopes ended on the par-3 12th with a double bogey from the bushes, not Rae's Creek.

"He is pretty amazing at letting things roll off his back and stepping up to very difficult golf shots and treating them like their own," Homa said about Scheffler. "He's obviously a tremendous talent, but I think that is his superpower."

**SEE WINS ON PAGE 21** 





Above: Scottie Scheffler holds the trophy after winning the Masters for the second time in three years Sunday at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga. Left: Newcomer Ludvig Aberg, of Sweden, was the only player who really challenged Scheffler in the final round. He finished four back for second place.

Elliott wins in Texas to snap 42-race skid » Auto racing, Page 20 027664 46314

