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EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

People sit in a bus during evacuation from Lyman, Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, on Saturday. As many as 100,000 people are believed to still be in blockaded Mariupol, including up to 1,000 civilians.

Mariupol evacuations underway

Pelosi visits Ukrainian president as efforts to bring people out of sprawling Azovstal steel plant begin

By CARA ANNA AND YESICA FISCH
Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — A long-awaited effort to evacuate people from a steel plant in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol was underway Sunday, the United Nations said, while U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi revealed she visited Ukraine's president to show unflinching American support for the country's defense against Russian aggression.

U.N. humanitarian spokesman Saviano Abreu told The Associated Press that the operation to bring people out of the sprawling Azovstal steel plant was being done with the International Committee of the Red Cross and in coordination with Ukrainian and Russian officials.

As many as 100,000 people are believed to still be in blockaded Mariupol, including up to 1,000 civilians who were hunkered down with an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian



RELATED
Ukrainian women train to clear land mines
Page 7

fighters beneath the Soviet-era steel plant — the only part of the city not occupied by the Russians.

Like other evacuations, success of the mission in Mariupol depended on Russia and its forces, deployed along a long series of

checkpoints before reaching Ukrainian ones.

Zaporizhzhia, a city about 141 miles northwest of Mariupol, was the destination of the evacuation

SEE EVACUATIONS ON PAGE 6

Report seeks to explain high rate of overseas suicide attempts

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Cultural isolation, family separations and lack of mental health support are among the factors that could explain why service members overseas appear more at risk to attempt suicide than their counterparts in the continental U.S., a new government report says.

Meanwhile, easier access to guns explains why troops based in the U.S. account for a higher percentage of suicide deaths, a Government Accountability Office report released Thursday said.

The GAO's review was prompted by a 2021 directive from Congress to examine factors involved in the rising number of suicides within the military, which has struggled to counter an upward trend in such deaths.

In 2020, the military recorded 384 active-duty service member suicides, a 33.5% rate increase since 2016, the GAO's analysis found. The number dropped to 328 in 2021, according to DOD data.

But to date, the Pentagon has not fully assessed suicide risk at remote overseas installations, the report said.

Service members assigned to remote overseas installations between 2016 and 2020 accounted for 8% of the active-duty population, but 8.5% of reported suicide attempts and 5.5% of reported suicide deaths during the same period, the report said.

Non-military firearms were involved in more than half of reported suicide deaths inside the continental U.S., while such firearms accounted for 21% and 26% of such deaths among active-duty service members at remote or non-remote installations outside of the conti-

SEE SUICIDE ON PAGE 3

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Buffett tells investors how he spent \$51 billion

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Warren Buffett gave Berkshire Hathaway investors a few details Saturday about how he spent more than \$50 billion earlier this year and again reassured them that the company he built will endure long after the 91-year-old billionaire is gone.

Tens of thousands of investors packed an Omaha arena Saturday to listen to Buffett and Berkshire's vice chairmen answer questions at Berkshire's annual meeting that was back in person for the

first time since the pandemic began.

Berkshire revealed in its earnings report Saturday morning that its mountain of cash shrank to \$106 billion in the first quarter from \$147 billion at the beginning of the year as Buffett invested \$51 billion in stocks and repurchased \$3.2 billion of its own shares.

Buffett told shareholders that right after he told them in his annual letter on Feb. 26 that he was having trouble finding anything to buy at attractive prices, Berkshire

spent more than \$40 billion on stocks over the next three weeks.

Buffett didn't reveal everything he bought but did mention several highlights, including boosting Berkshire's stake in oil giant Chevron to \$26 billion, up from \$4.5 billion at the beginning of the year to make it one of the conglomerate's four biggest investments. Berkshire also spent billions buying up 14% of Occidental Petroleum's shares in the first half of March, and added to its already massive investment in Apple.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (May 2)	\$1.03
Dollar buys (May 2)	0.9242
British pound (May 2)	\$1.22
Japanese yen (May 2)	125.00
South Korean won (May 2)	1234.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain(Dinar)	0.3770
Britain (Pound)	1.2555
Canada (Dollar)	1.2742
China(Yuan)	6.6065
Denmark (Krone)	7.0633
Egypt (Pound)	18.4913
Euro	0.9493
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8478
Hungary (Forint)	359.00
Israel (Shekel)	3.3220
Japan (Yen)	130.08
Kuwait(Dinar)	0.3067
Norway (Krone)	9.2937
Philippines (Peso)	52.35
Poland (Zloty)	4.44
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7509
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3808

South Korea (Won)	1261.83
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9703
Thailand (Baht)	34.25
Turkey (NewLira)	14.8564

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

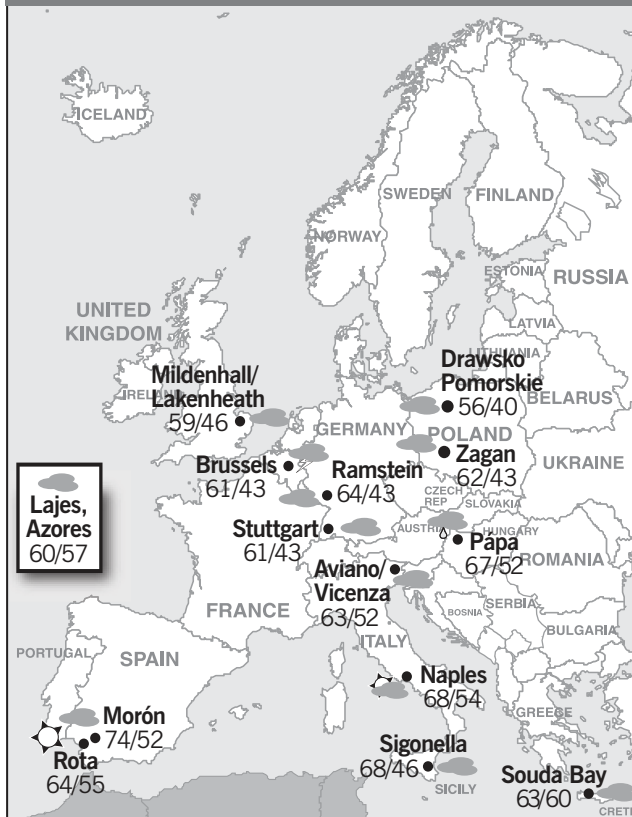
Prime rate	3.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	1.50
Federal funds market rate	0.08
3-month bill	0.82
30-year bond	2.92

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE



TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY



TEXTRON

An Aerosonde drone system launches from the guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins on April 4.

New drone fills air support role aboard Navy destroyer in Japan

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy tried out a new drone system recently aboard one of its older destroyers, a project that, if successful, could provide low impact, unmanned air support for the warship.

The Aerosonde Small Unmanned Aircraft System, property of defense contractor Textron Inc., successfully completed its first flight on April 4 from the deck of the guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins, according to a company news release that day.

It was unclear Friday where the flight took place. The Higgins, homeported at Yokosuka, joined the 7th Fleet in August, according to the Navy.

The Aerosonde was installed in February and is expected to remain aboard the Higgins through October, with an option for an extension, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Mark Langford told Stars and Stripes in an email April 21.

The Higgins, an Arleigh Burke Flight II variant commissioned 23

years ago, lacks the onboard hangar built into later, Flight IIA and Flight III variants to fully accommodate MH-60 Seahawk helicopters. The Navy is using the Aerosonde, which has a relatively small footprint, to fill that gap.

“The Aerosonde UAS provides an aerial component without needing to launch a manned helicopter,” Langford said. “Its sensor suite is personalized for the [destroyer] and its planned missions, and [it] greatly extends visual or radar horizon sensor ranges beyond the ship’s organic capabilities.”

The Aerosonde has a 12-foot wingspan and weighs 80 pounds, according to Textron’s website. It has a range of 75 nautical miles, can stay aloft 14 hours, fly at a maximum 65 knots and carry up to 20 pounds.

A two-person team can launch the drone in under an hour; it’s powered by the same fuel that Seahawk helicopters use, Textron spokeswoman Susan Benhoff told Stars and Stripes.

“When you see these systems operate in collaboration with oth-

er manned and unmanned systems you begin to see their true power and potential,” she said in an April 21 email. “We have already demonstrated that air, land and sea unmanned systems can team with each other, extending range beyond line of sight or allowing for operations over the horizon line.”

A typical Aerosonde mission includes maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, Langford said.

Private contractors operate the system under a fee-for-services model, which Benhoff said gives flexibility to both the Navy and Textron.

Only the Higgins has the Aerosonde right now, but a second drone may deploy later this year, probably on another 7th Fleet vessel, Benhoff said.

Textron also plans to field another version of the system that’s capable of vertical takeoff and landing called the Aerosonde Hybrid Quad UAS, she said.

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South Korea lifts outdoor mask mandate

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Koreans may remove their pandemic masks while outdoors starting Monday as the number of new COVID-19 cases in the country continues to fall.

The mask mandate may be disappearing but the Ministry of Health and Welfare “actively advises” people to continue wearing them, according to a ministry statement Friday.

The change does not affect the country’s indoor mask policy at businesses and public buildings; people are still required to wear them in these areas unless they are eating and drinking. Masks also remain mandatory in groups of 50 or more people, such as a sports arena or a rally.

The ministry also advised that individuals at a high risk of infection, such as seniors, and those with COVID-19 symptoms ought to continue wearing masks outdoors.

South Korea’s response to the pandemic was “surely stabilizing,” Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum said Friday during a briefing at the Seoul Government Complex.

Kim acknowledged concerns about the new policy but said health officials determined that “the government cannot continue to turn away from the frustration and inconvenience from people who are not able to take off their masks when walking alone or even during family picnics.”

South Korea, one of the first COVID-19 hotspots of the pandemic, imposed a mandatory mask policy in October 2020.

Nearly two years and over 17 million confirmed cases later, the

mask mandate and a host of other restrictions are being lifted.

On Monday, the Health and Welfare Ministry allowed eating and drinking in enclosed, public areas, such as movie theaters, gyms and buses. A week prior, the ministry eased its business curfew, the 10-person cap on gatherings and the weeklong quarantine for people who test positive for COVID-19.

South Korea on Thursday reported 50,568 new COVID-19 cases, down from 81,058 a week prior, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. About 88% of the country’s 51 million people have received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and about 65% received a vaccine booster shot.

U.S. Forces Korea dropped the mask mandate on its installations on April 25. USFK, responsible for roughly 28,500 troops, lifted the order as its new case numbers declined for a fourth consecutive week.

However, individual commanders and building managers may impose their own mask requirements on a case-by-case basis.

USFK counted 252 new COVID-19 infections for the seven-day period ending Monday, down from 326 new cases for the week ending April 18.

The command lowered its health protection level on April 21 and allowed its fully vaccinated population to visit adults-only businesses, bars, clubs, karaoke bars and saunas, which were previously restricted for most of the pandemic.

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Suicide: Agency recommends DOD establish process to assess suicide risk

FROM PAGE 1

mental U.S., respectively, the GAO found.

The GAO defined remote locations as those outside the contiguous United States, including those in Alaska, Hawaii and overseas that have less Morale, Welfare and Recreation funding; that qualify as a hardship-duty pay location; or that have less than standard tour lengths.

Military officials at remote

overseas installations told the GAO that they believed service members should undergo more rigorous screening prior to being assigned.

“By establishing such a process to assess risk factors for suicide and related challenges associated with assignment to remote OCONUS installations, DOD can improve its understanding of risks and challenges and better address them as needed,” the GAO said.

Officials from U.S. Army Garri-

son Alaska, Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska told the GAO that a long winter with seasonal periods of extended darkness and light could affect service members and contribute to mental health issues.

Meanwhile, officials from Yokosuka Naval Base in mainland Japan and Marine bases in Okinawa said restrictions that put limits on off-base travel for some service members — especially those who are young or have limited trans-

portation — could lead to isolation. An inability “to relax, socialize or engage with Japanese culture” has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, officials said.

“Navy and Marine Corps suicide prevention officials stated that risk factors including lack of access to behavioral health care, barriers to health care, cultural and religious beliefs, and social isolation caused by separation from friends and family may be

more prevalent at remote OCONUS installations,” GAO reported.

The GAO made a series of recommendations, including that DOD establish a process to assess suicide risk at remote overseas installations. The report also said the Defense Department should develop a strategy to address shortages in primary care behavioral health providers.

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MILITARY

Hundreds based in Europe get their diplomas

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

OBERSUELZEN, Germany — A few weeks before graduating on Saturday with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a 4.0 GPA, Maurice Alsing saw something new: the faces of his classmates and professor.

Face masks recently became optional in Alsing's first in-person class this spring at the University of Maryland Global Campus Europe since the start of the pandemic.

"That was amazing," he said of being able to sit in a classroom and engage, face-to-face, with other students and his instructor after two years of Zoom and online classes.

Alsing, 22, was one of 165 graduates to receive a diploma at UMGC Europe's 2022 commencement — an outdoor ceremony held at a soccer field in a village east of Kaiserslautern in German wine country.

Temperatures were chilly, prompting some attendees to wrap themselves in blankets, a gift to each graduate from UMGC Europe. And umbrellas came out during a brief shower that threatened to dampen the festivities.

But the rain held off as graduates and their families celebrated a journey marked by numerous

challenges, such as balancing studies with deployments and demanding military operations and pivoting to virtual classes during the pandemic.

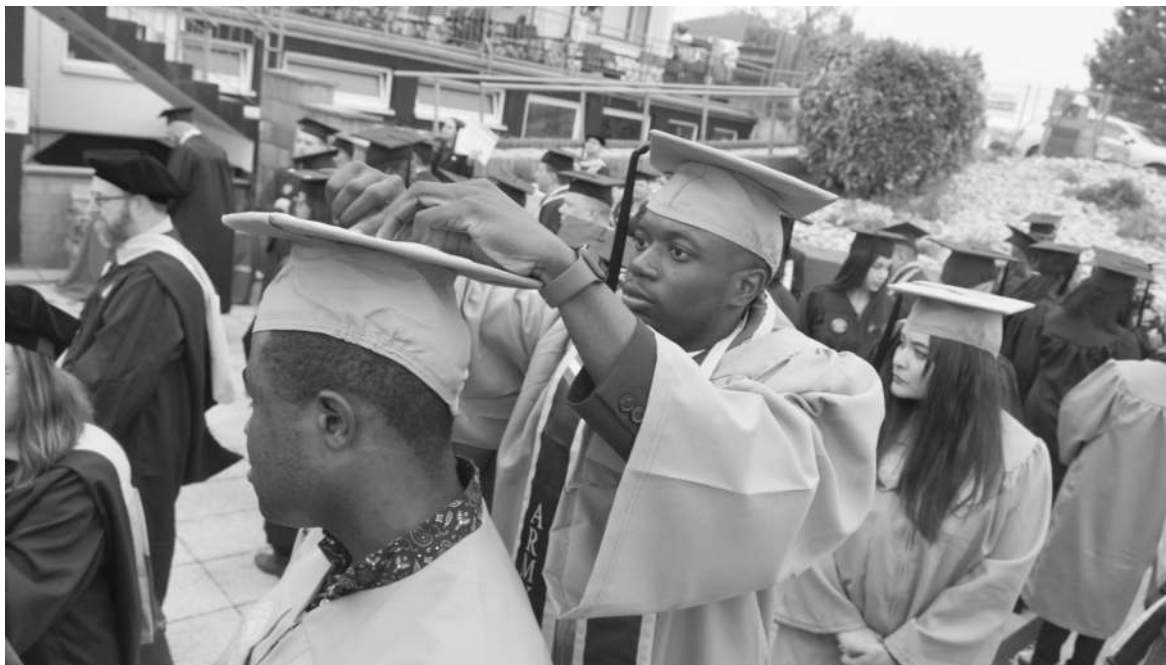
From supporting the evacuation and temporary housing of tens of thousands of Afghan refugees last fall at U.S. bases in Europe to the current war in Ukraine, "these are trying times," Army Col. Charles Fisher, 21st Theater Sustainment Command chief of staff, told graduates.

"I'm sure that your current timeline has not been easy, but you're here," he said. "How proud of yourself you must be — and you should be."

Of the 1,193 UMGC Europe graduates this year, 51% are active duty, representing the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and for the first time, the Space Force.

"We have one space cadet — just kidding — one Space Force graduate walking today," said Tony Cho, UMGC Europe vice president and director.

Sgt. Lyubomir Grigorov studied computer networks and cybersecurity, one of 609 in UMGC Europe's class of 2022 to earn a bachelor's degree. Of the remainder, 440 received an associate's and 144 a master's. Worldwide, nearly 14,000 graduates earned a UMGC



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Army Spc. Ali Camara helps Spc. Samuel Omojola adjust his graduation cap before the commencement ceremony Saturday, for the University of Maryland Global Campus Europe class of 2022.

degree this year.

For most of the last two years, UMGC Europe professors have taught students in their homes and barracks from their own homes, Cho said in an interview before the ceremony.

"We are back on site now; students are beginning to come back," he said.

But UMGC is trying something new: "tethered classes," where an instructor teaches a class in-person and students have the option of attending on site or joining via Zoom, Cho said.

That flexibility helped one student who deployed to eastern Europe recently. "He didn't want to drop his class," Cho said. "He was out in the woods, with night-vision goggles on, zooming into the class with his cell phone."

"We try to adapt and understand what they're going through," he said of UMGC's stu-

dents.

This year's graduates took classes from 24 countries, including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Poland, Turkey, Japan, Qatar, Iraq, the United States, Japan, Korea, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia and Uganda.

Air Force Master Sgt. Donnel Carney, 35, started his bachelor's in business administration five years ago at Spangdahlem Air Base. A ground transportation specialist, he finished his studies while assigned to NATO headquarters in Belgium, persevering despite deploying four times in the interim.

"There was plenty of times when it seemed like, 'Oh, man, where's the end?'" he said before receiving his diploma. He told himself, "Keep pushing through, keep fighting."

Carney was typical of this year's bachelor's degree graduates, whose average age was 34. But he

finished faster than the typical 6.8 years.

Others were outliers, such as Nicole Via. At 43, Via received a bachelor's in social science after becoming an empty nester with her husband, Air Force Master Sgt. Kenneth Via. She completed 120 credit hours in 2.5 years while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

"I surprised myself, to be honest, that I really could do it," Via said. "The first six months or so I would read a paper 10 times before I turned it in because I was so nervous."

Her husband, 45, an intelligence analyst at Ramstein Air Base, earned his master's in cyber security technology.

"It's really good to see her do this because she didn't think she could," Kenneth Via said.

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Barracks to replace Korean War-era Quonset huts on Hawaii

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The Army last week unveiled 20 newly built barracks at Pohakuloa Training Area on Hawaii's Big Island, the first phase of construction to replace the roughly 100 1950s-era Quonset huts.

Construction took two years at a cost of \$17 million, Lt. Col. Kevin Cronin, commander of the training area, said in a phone interview Wednesday. He oversaw a dedication ceremony Tuesday that included a traditional Hawaiian blessing.

The 132,000-acre Pohakuloa Training Area replicates the kind of austere conditions troops could expect to face in combat. U.S. soldiers and Marines, as well as troops from partner and ally nations, use the area for live-fire training, including heavy artillery and missiles.

"We're the premier Pacific

training area where [troops] reach the highest level of readiness," Cronin said. "It's great to have new buildings and new facilities for our troops to come here to train."

"Anything that allows the troops to focus on training — what they're here to do — is important," he said.

The Quonset huts are prone to overheating in the sun and becoming too cold at night, he said. Rodents have encroached on the buildings over the decades.

The Quonsets were built in the 1950s, primarily by soldiers with the Hawaii Army National Guard's engineer units, Cronin said.

Each new barrack is designed to house 50 individuals, he said. The next 80 barracks will be built over roughly the next decade, with the entire project costing about \$200 million.

It is being done in phases, with two rows of Quonsets to be demol-

ished in each stage.

There is no requirement from a historical preservation standpoint to save any of the Quonsets, said Cronin, but added that from a personal standpoint he would like to see a couple stay standing.

"I would like to see [saved] the Quonset hut chapel — which is the only Quonset hut chapel in the Department of Defense — and the theater, which is located next to the chapel," he said. "We would still use them, but as two remnants of where we came from here at PTA. It's always important to remember our legacy."

That history goes back to December 1943, when Marines from the 2nd Marine Division arrived on the Big Island to train and refit after the Battle of Tarawa a month earlier, Cronin said.

"Then they went off to their victories in the Pacific — Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima, to name a few," he said.

The size of the training area continued to grow, and in 1964 the Army signed a 65-year lease with Hawaii for about 23,000 acres of state land.

The Army is attempting to renew that lease before it expires in 2029. It is seeking public comment on the draft environmental impact statement for that renewal.

Securing a new lease is no small matter for the Army because that state land fully surrounds the 758 acres of federal land that include the training area's airfield and cantonment — including all those rows of soon-to-be-built barracks.

Few of the dozens of people who showed up to public hearings on Monday and Tuesday evenings on the Big Island expressed support for the renewal.

"We gotta say, stop the leases," Maxine Kahaulelio, a longtime community organizer in Hawaii, said at Tuesday's hearing in Wai-
mea. "No more military. Go home."

We wanna throw you guys a luau in 2029 — the biggest luau you guys want — and then escort you guys out of our island and say, 'Mahalo.'"

Kalani Flores, another frequent critic of the training range, said at the hearing Tuesday that Pohakuloa is an incompatible location for the live-fire training because it is the "energetic center of the island" and every explosion and gunshot causes "an energetic disturbance on our island that has far more repercussions than you can understand."

Cronin seemed to take such opposition in stride when asked during the interview for his impression of the hearings.

"I welcome those comments and comments across the stakeholder spectrum because that's part of the process," he said.

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MILITARY

Group updates WWII graves to show Jewish faith

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

Seven Jewish American troops who died in World War II received new headstones that accurately reflect their faith at ceremonies in France, Belgium and Luxembourg last week.

The seven men had been buried under Latin-cross headstones, which were replaced by Stars of David, the American Battle Monuments Commission said Friday.

"We take pride in being able to right this wrong," commission spokeswoman Alison Bettencourt said in a statement.

The headstone replacements came after genealogical research by the U.S.-based Operation Benjamin and requests by the families of the service members, the commission said.

Jewish service members were sometimes buried under crosses as a result of clerical errors or because they had disguised their faith to protect themselves in case they were captured by Nazi troops, the

Los Angeles Times reported in 2020, adding that the cross was considered the default symbol.

A ceremony in Hamm, Luxembourg, on Wednesday replaced the cross with a Star of David on the gravestone of Technician 5th Grade Everett Seixas, a soldier from New York who died during World War II.

His family members brought the flag they received when Seixas was buried in 1949.

U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg Thomas Barrett spoke at the event, a statement from the embassy said.

"I am thankful to see Everett Seixas publicly recognized as a man of proud Jewish heritage who fought for the United States and his faith," Barrett said, as cited in the statement.

The gravestone of Pvt. Marvin Ashkenas, of Bloomfield, N.J., was replaced at Epinal American Cemetery in Dinoze, France. Maj. Maxwell J. Papurt, of Cleveland; 2nd Lt. Howard U. Feldman, of Allentown,



U.S. EMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

Workers place a Jewish headstone during a grave marker replacement ceremony Wednesday at the Luxembourg-American Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg. The ceremony was held by Operation Benjamin, an organization working to preserve the memories of Jewish American soldiers who died in World War II.

Penn.; and Pvt. Albert Belmont, of New York, received Stars of David at Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold, France.

Another ceremony at Ardennes American Cemetery in Neupre, Belgium, honored 2nd Lt. Kenneth E. Robinson, of

Cleveland, and 1st Lt. Joseph Sugarman, of Memphis, Tenn.

Efforts by Operation Benjamin to provide accurate grave markers to Jewish troops killed during the war began in 2014.

The organization is named after Benjamin Garadetsky, a

U.S. serviceman killed in 1944 who was mistakenly buried underneath a cross at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France.

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Shoemaker takes reins at Navy's Sigonella base

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Capt. Aaron Shoemaker took over Friday as commanding officer of Sicily's Naval Air Station Sigonella, relieving Capt. Kevin "Kepper" Pickard Jr., who had served in the role since 2019.

At Sigonella, Pickard oversaw the Navy's only forward-deployed air station in Europe through the COVID-19 pandemic, the evacuation of Afghan refugees and flooding that affected not only the base but also its family housing complex, said Rear



Shoemaker

Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Region Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia.

Gray praised Pickard for his forward-thinking leadership, and he presented the base with a Navy Unit Commendation for its work on behalf of Afghan evacuees during Operation Allies Refuge in 2021. The honor is the second-highest award a Navy unit can receive.

"I honestly could not have asked for more," Gray said of Pickard's efforts.

Pickard next will serve as chief of staff for Navy Region Northwest in Bangor, Wash., beginning in June, according to a Friday statement from NAS Sigonella.

Shoemaker will oversee a base that has 37 tenant commands, including a Marine tilt-rotor squadron. About 2,300 sailors, 700 civilians, 800 Italians and 2,200 military family members work or live on the base.

His last Navy assignments include a

stint as branch head at the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations from July 2020 to August 2021 and a three-year stretch as assistant deputy director for operations for the Joint Staff in Arlington, Va., according to his LinkedIn profile.

Shoemaker, whose first deployment as a pilot was to Sigonella in 2001, said his priorities will include professionalism, readiness and families.

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MATTHEW B. FREDERICKS/U.S. Air Force

Lt. Gen. Richard M. Clark, U.S. Air Force Academy superintendent, speaks during the T-7A Red Hawk rollout ceremony at Boeing's facility Thursday in St. Louis. The T-7A will eventually replace the T-38C Talon as the trainer jet for the Air Force's fighter pilots.

Air Force's new training aircraft pays tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

Stars and Stripes

The first new Air Force aircraft of a program expected to train a generation of airmen has rolled off the production line, complete with a paint job that honors the trailblazing World War II-era Tuskegee Airmen.

The T-7A Red Hawk training aircraft was unveiled by Boeing at Lambert International Airport in St. Louis, and is one of 351 aircraft to be delivered under a \$9.2 billion

contract signed in 2018, an Air Force statement said Thursday.

The T-7A will train airmen to fly fourth and fifth-generation fighters, such as the F-35. It is set to replace the Air Education and Training Compound's T-38C Talon. The initial version of the T-38 made its debut in 1961 as the world's first supersonic training aircraft.

The T-7A Red Hawk has its red tail symbol and name taken from

the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk and the 99th Fighter Squadron, the first African American fighter squadron.

The Red Hawk is the first Air Force aircraft to use digital tools that allowed it to move from the design phase to testing in three years. It will be tested on the ground before heading to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., for flight testing later this year, the statement said.

EUROPE

Investors brace for Russia to default

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Prices for Russian credit default swaps — insurance contracts that protect an investor against a default — plunged sharply overnight after Moscow used its precious foreign currency reserves to make a last minute debt payment on Friday.

The cost for a five-year credit default swap on Russian debt was \$5.84 million to protect \$10 million in debt. That price was nearly half the one on Thursday, which at roughly \$11 million for \$10 million in debt protection was

a signal that investors were certain of an eventual Russian default.

Russia used its foreign currency reserves sitting outside of the country to make the payment, backing down from the Kremlin's earlier threats that it would use rubles to pay these obligations. In a statement, the Russia Finance Ministry did not say whether future payments would be made in rubles.

Despite the insurance contract plunge, investors remain largely convinced that Russia will even-

tually default on its debts for the first time since 1917. The major ratings agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's have declared Russia is in "selective default" on its obligations.

Russia has been hit with extensive sanctions by the United States, the European Union and others in response to its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine and its continuing military operation to take over Ukrainian territory.

The Credit Default Determination Committee — an industry group of 14 banks and investors

that determines whether or not to pay on these swaps — said Friday that they "continue to monitor the situation" after Russia's payment. Their next meeting is on May 3.

At the beginning of April, Russia's finance ministry said it tried to make a \$649 million payment due April 6 toward two bonds to an unnamed U.S. bank — previously reported as JPMorgan Chase.

At that time, tightened sanctions imposed for Russia's invasion of Ukraine prevented the

payment from being accepted, so Moscow attempted to make the debt payment in rubles. The Kremlin, which repeatedly said it was financially able and willing to continue to pay on its debts, had argued that extraordinary events gave them the legal footing to pay in rubles, instead of dollars or euros.

Investors and rating agencies, however, disagreed and did not expect Russia to be able to convert the rubles into dollars before a 30-day grace period expired next week.

Evacuations: First group of about 100 Ukrainians evacuated from steel plant

FROM PAGE 1

effort, Abreu said. He said women, children and the elderly — who have been stranded for nearly two months — will be evacuated to the city, where they will receive immediate humanitarian support, including psychological services.

Mariupol has seen some of the worst suffering of the war. A maternity hospital was hit with a lethal Russian airstrike in the opening weeks of the war, and hundreds of people were reported killed in the bombing of a theater where civilians were taking shelter.

"As the operations are still ongoing, we will not provide further details at this point, to guarantee the safety of the civilians and humanitarians in the convoy," Abreu said of the evacuation.

"The U.N. will also continue to push for the safe passage out of Mariupol city for all those civilians who wish to leave," he said.

The U.N. said the convoy to evacuate civilians started on Friday, traveling some 140 miles before reaching the plant in Mariupol on Saturday morning.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a tweet Sunday afternoon that the first group of about 100 people was headed to Ukrainian-controlled territory.

"Tomorrow we'll meet them in Zaporizhzhia. Grateful to our team! Now they, together with #UN, are working on the evacuation of other civilians from the plant," he tweeted.

A team with Doctors Without Borders was at a reception center for displaced people in Zaporizhzhia on Sunday, in preparation for the U.N. convoy's arrival, if successful. Stress, exhaustion and low supplies of food have likely

weakened the health of civilians who have been trapped underground at the steel plant.

People fleeing Russian-occupied areas have described their vehicles being fired on, and Ukrainian officials have repeatedly accused Russian forces of shelling evacuation routes on which the two sides had agreed.

Russia's high-stakes offensive in coastal southern Ukraine and the country's eastern industrial heartland has Ukrainian forces fighting village-by-village and more civilians fleeing airstrikes and artillery shelling.

Pelosi, a California Democrat who is second in line to succeed the president, is the most senior American lawmaker to travel to Ukraine since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Her Saturday visit came just days after Russia launched rockets at the capital during a visit by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.

During a Sunday news conference in the Polish city of Rzeszow, Pelosi said she and other members of a U.S. congressional delegation met with Zelenskyy in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, for three hours and brought him "a message of appreciation from the American people for his leadership."

Rep. Jason Crow, a U.S. Army veteran and a member of the House intelligence and armed services committees, said he came to Ukraine with three areas of focus: "Weapons, weapons and weapons."

"We have to make sure the Ukrainians have what they need to win. What we have seen in the last two months is their ferocity, their intense pride, their ability to fight and their ability to win if they have



Local residents walk along a street market Friday in Mariupol, in territory under the government of the Donetsk People's Republic, eastern Ukraine. This photo was taken during a trip organized by the Russian Ministry of Defense.

/AP

the support to do so," the Colorado Democrat said.

Russian forces have embarked on a major military operation to seize significant parts of southern and eastern Ukraine following their failure to capture the capital. Mariupol, a port city on the Sea of Azov, is a key target because of its strategic location near the Crimea Peninsula, which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014.

"All the leaders of the free world know what Russia has done to Mariupol. And Russia will not go unpunished for this," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. He warned that Russia was "gathering additional forces for new attacks against our military in the east of the country."

Limited evacuations from the city took place on Saturday, but the details had been unclear given the number of parties involved in the negotiations and the volatile situation on the ground.

The Russian Defense Ministry said a total of 46 people were evacuated

from areas near the Azovstal plant.

On Saturday, Ukrainian regiment Deputy Commander Sviatoslav Palamar called for the evacuation of wounded Ukrainian fighters as well as civilians. "We don't know why they are not taken away and their evacuation to the territory controlled by Ukraine is not being discussed," he said in a video posted on the regiment's Telegram channel.

Video and images from inside the Mariupol steel plant, shared with the AP by two Ukrainian women who said their husbands are among the fighters refusing to surrender there, showed unidentified men with stained bandages; others had open wounds or amputated limbs.

A skeleton medical staff was treating at least 600 wounded people, said the women, who identified their husbands as members of the Azov Regiment of Ukraine's National Guard.

Some of the wounds were rot-

ting with gangrene, they said.

The AP could not independently verify the date and location of the video, which the women said was taken in the last week in the maze of corridors and bunkers beneath the plant.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance has flowed into Ukraine since the war began, but Russia's vast armories mean Ukraine will continue to require huge amounts of support.

In the days before the war began, Western intelligence estimated Russia had positioned near the border as many as 190,000 troops; Ukraine's standing military totals about 200,000, spread throughout the country.

With plenty of firepower still in reserve, Russia's offensive still could intensify and overrun the Ukrainians.

Overall the Russian army has an estimated 900,000 active-duty personnel.

Russia also has a much larger air force and navy.

EUROPE

Ukrainian women train to clear land mines

By FLORENT BAJRAMI
Associated Press

PEJA, Kosovo — Learning to identify and defuse explosives is something Anastasiia Minchukova never thought she would have to do as an English teacher in Ukraine. Yet there she was wearing a face shield, armed with a land mine detector and venturing into a field dotted with danger warnings.

Russia's war in Ukraine took Minchukova, 20, and five other women to Kosovo, where they are attending a hands-on course in clearing land mines and other dangers that may remain hidden across their country once combat ends.

"There is a huge demand on people who know how to do demining because the war will be over soon," Minchukova said. "We believe there is so much work to be done."

The 18-day training camp takes place at a range in the western town of Peja where a Malta-based company regularly offers courses for job-seekers, firms working in former war zones, humanitarian organizations and government

agencies.

Kosovo was the site of a devastating 1998-99 armed conflict between ethnic Albanian separatists and Serbian forces that killed about 13,000 people and left thousands of unexploded mines in need of clearing. Praedium Consulting Malta's range includes bombed and derelict buildings as well as expanses of vegetation.

Instructor Artur Tigani, who tailored the curriculum to reflect Ukraine's environment, said he was glad to share his small Balkan nation's experience with the Ukrainian women. Though 23 years have passed, "it's still fresh in our memories, the difficulties we met when we started clearance in Kosovo," Tigani said.

During a recent class, he took his trainees through a makeshift minefield before moving to an improvised outdoor classroom featuring a huge board with various samples of explosives and mines.

While it is impossible to assess how littered with mines and unexploded ordnance Ukraine is at the moment, the aftermaths of other



VISAR KRZEZIU/AP

Demining instructor Artur Tigani, left, briefs a group of Ukrainian emergency services personnel for specialist training in explosive ordnance disposal and survey training in Peja, Kosovo, last week.

conflicts suggest the problem will be huge.

"In many parts of the world, explosive remnants of war continue to kill and maim thousands of civilians each year during and long after active hostilities have ended. The majority of victims are chil-

dren," the International Committee of the Red Cross testified at a December U.N. conference.

"Locating (unexploded ordnance) in the midst of rubble and picking them out from among a wide array of everyday objects, many of which are made of similar

material is a dangerous, onerous and often extremely time-consuming task," the Red Cross said.

Military analysts say it appears Russian forces have employed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, while Ukraine has used anti-tank mines to try to prevent the Russians from gaining ground.

With Ukrainian men from 18 to 60 years old prohibited from leaving their country and most engaged in defending it, the women wanted to help any way they could despite the risks involved in mine clearing.

Another Ukrainian student, Yuliia Katelik, 38, took her three children to safety in Poland early in the war. She went back to Ukraine and then joined the demining training to help make sure it's safe for her children when they return home to the eastern city of Kramatorsk, where a rocket attack on a crowded train station killed more than 50 people last month.

"Acutely, probably as a mother, I do understand that there is a problem and it's quite serious, especially for the children," Katelik said.

Look for the orange vest: Ukrainians in Romania help others

By CHISATO TANAKA
Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania — Elena Trofimchuk fled Ukraine to Romania more than a month ago. She now sees Bucharest's North Railway Station as a second home.

She doesn't live there, but it's where she spends most of her day welcoming fellow Ukrainian refugees escaping from Russia's war and helping them sort out tickets, accommodation and onward destinations.

The 26-year-old said that keeping herself busy and useful keeps her from dwelling on Russia's shelling of her hometown, Odesa, where many of her friends remain.

"If you sit and do nothing, you can just become crazy because you're always searching for news. It's very hard. So here I can help people buy tickets and find accommodations. I



CHISATO TANAKA/AP

Ukrainian volunteer Anastasiia Haiduk shows a departure board to refugees Saturday at North Railway Station in Bucharest, Romania.

even help Romanians in the kitchen," Trofimchuk said.

Before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, she worked as a photogra-

pher.

Trofimchuk is just one of many orange-vested Ukrainian volunteers working at the station.

Ukrainian volunteer Vitalii Ivanchuk flew all the way from Sri Lanka where he lived with his Ukrainian girlfriend to help refugees coming into Romania.

The 29-year-old IT developer said that many Ukrainians have a tough time communicating with Romanians, and volunteers who can speak both Ukrainian and English are in high demand.

His girlfriend, Anastasiia Haiduk, quit her investment job shortly after the war started and decided to volunteer at the station until the war ends and she can be reunited with her family in Ukraine.

The Romanian government is currently giving away free train tickets to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Romania that they can use to travel on to Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Trofimchuk said she was moved by the warm welcome and the Romanians' show of solidarity with Ukraine.

"Every Romanian person wants to help. They're very friendly. And I was shocked about this. I'm so happy that everyone wants to help," Trofimchuk said.

For some Ukrainian volunteers, their Saturday evening ritual is to join a weekly demonstration at the Russian Embassy in Bucharest along with Ukrainian residents and Romanians.

Station volunteers in Bucharest say they are now seeing an increasing number of arrivals from Odesa. Trofimchuk skipped a recent protest, saying she expected people to arrive from her hometown.

"I will stay at the station as late as I can, because there might be people who need my help," she said.

Actor, activist Jolie makes surprise Ukraine visit, meets children

Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine — Hollywood actress and U.N. humanitarian Angelina Jolie made a surprise visit to the western Ukrainian city of Lviv on Saturday, the Lviv regional governor said on Telegram.

According to Maksym Kozytskyy, Jolie — who has been a UNHCR Special Envoy for Refugees since 2011 — had come to speak with displaced people who have found refuge in Lviv, including children undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in the missile

strike on the Kramatorsk railway station in early April.

The attack in the eastern Ukrainian city appeared to deliberately target a crowd of mostly women and children trying to flee a looming Russian offensive, killing at least 52 and wounding dozens more.

"She was very moved by (the children's) stories," Kozytskyy wrote. "One girl was even able to privately tell Ms. Jolie about a dream she'd had."

He said Jolie also visited a boarding school, talk with students and

took photos with them, adding "she promised she would come again."

According to Kozytskyy, Jolie also met with evacuees arriving at Lviv's central railway station, as well as with Ukrainian volunteers providing the new arrivals with medical help and counseling.

"Plenty of people who saw Ms. Jolie in the Lviv region could not believe that it was really her," he wrote. "But since Feb. 24, Ukraine has shown the entire world that there are plenty of incredible things here."



MAKSYM KOZUTSKY, LVIV (UKRAINE) CITY HALL/AP

Angelina Jolie, actor and UNHCR goodwill ambassador, met with Ukrainian children affected by the war, in Lviv, on Saturday.

NATION

Aid to Trump election schemes detailed

By FARNOUGH AMIRI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rioters who smashed their way into the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, succeeded — at least temporarily — in delaying the certification of Joe Biden's election to the White House.

Hours before, Rep. Jim Jordan had been trying to achieve the same thing.

Texting with then-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, a close ally and friend, at nearly midnight on Jan. 5, Jordan offered a legal rationale for what President Donald Trump was publicly demanding — that Vice President Mike Pence, in his ceremonial role presiding over the electoral count, somehow assert the authority to reject electors from Biden-won states.

Pence “should call out all electoral votes that he believes are unconstitutional as no electoral votes at all,” Jordan wrote.

“I have pushed for this,” Meadows replied. “Not sure it is going to happen.”

The text exchange, in an April 22 court filing from the congressional panel investigating the Jan. 6 riot, is in a batch of startling evidence that shows the deep involvement of some House Republicans in Trump's desperate attempt to stay in power. A review of the evidence finds new details about how, long before the attack on the Capitol unfolded, several GOP lawmakers were participating directly in Trump's campaign to reverse the results of a free and fair election.

It's a connection that members of the House Jan. 6 committee are making explicit as they prepare to launch public hearings in June. The Republicans plotting with Trump and the rioters who attacked the Capitol were aligned in their goals, if not the mob's violent tactics, creating a convergence that nearly upended the nation's peaceful



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Texting with then-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, on Jan. 5, 2021, Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio — seen above in February in Orlando, Fla. — offered a legal rationale for what then-President Donald Trump was publicly demanding — that Vice President Mike Pence, in his ceremonial role presiding over the electoral count, assert the authority to reject electors from Joe Biden-won states.

transfer of power.

“It appears that a significant number of House members and a few senators had more than just a passing role in what went on,” Rep. Bennie Thompson, the Democratic chairman of the Jan. 6 committee, told The Associated Press last week.

Since launching its investigation last summer, the Jan. 6 panel has been slowly gaining new details about what lawmakers said and did in the weeks before the insurrection. Members have asked three GOP lawmakers — Jordan, of Ohio, Rep. Scott Perry, of Pennsylvania, and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, of California — to testify voluntarily. All have refused. Other lawmakers could be called in the coming days.

So far, the Jan. 6 committee has refrained from issuing subpoenas to lawmakers, fearing the repercussions of such an extraordinary step.

But the lack of cooperation from lawmakers hasn't prevented the panel from obtaining new information about their actions.

The latest court document, submitted in response to a lawsuit from Meadows, contained excerpts from just a handful of the more than 930 interviews the Jan. 6 panel has conducted. It includes information on several high-level meetings nearly a dozen House Republicans attended where Trump's allies flirted with ways to give him another term.

Among the ideas: naming fake slates of electors in seven swing states, declaring martial law and seizing voting machines.

The efforts started in the weeks after The Associated Press declared Biden president-elect.

In early December 2020, several lawmakers attended a meeting in the White House counsel's office where attorneys for the president advised them that a plan to put up

an alternate slate of electors declaring Trump the winner was not “legally sound.” One lawmaker, Perry, pushed back on that position. So did GOP Reps. Matt Gaetz, of Florida, and Louie Gohmert, of Texas, according to testimony from Cassidy Hutchinson, a former special assistant in the Trump White House.

Despite the warning from the counsel's office, Trump's allies moved forward. On Dec. 14, 2020, as rightly chosen Democratic electors in seven states — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, New Mexico, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — met at their seat of state government to cast their votes, the fake electors gathered as well.

They declared themselves the rightful electors and submitted false Electoral College certificates declaring Trump the true winner of the presidential election in their states.

Those certificates from the “alternate electors” were then sent to Congress, where they were ignored.

The majority of the lawmakers have since denied their involvement in these efforts.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, of Georgia, testified in a hearing in April that she does not recall conversations she had with the White House or the texts she sent to Meadows about Trump invoking martial law.

Gohmert told AP he also does not recall being involved and that he is not sure he could be helpful to the committee's investigation. Rep. Jody Hice, of Georgia, played down his actions, saying it is routine for members of the president's party to be going in and out of the White House to speak about a number of topics. Hice is now running for secretary of state in Georgia, a position responsible for the state's elections.

Rep. Andy Biggs, of Arizona, didn't deny his public efforts to challenge the election results but

called recent reports about his deep involvement untrue.

In a statement Saturday, Rep. Paul Gosar, of Arizona, reiterated his “serious” concerns about the 2020 election. “Discussions about the Electoral Count Act were appropriate, necessary and warranted,” he added.

Requests for comment from the other lawmakers were not immediately returned.

Less than a week later after the early December meeting at the White House, another plan emerged. In a meeting with House Freedom Caucus members and Trump White House officials, the discussion turned to the decisive action they believed that Pence could take on Jan. 6.

Those in attendance virtually and in-person, according to committee testimony, were Hice, Biggs, Gosar, Perry, Gaetz, Jordan, Gohmert, Reps. Mo Brooks, of Alabama, and Debbie Lesko, of Arizona, and Greene, then a congresswoman-elect.

“What was the conversation like?” the committee asked Hutchinson, who was a frequent presence in the meetings that took place in December 2020 and January 2021.

“They felt that he had the authority to, pardon me if my phrasing isn't correct on this, but — send votes back to the states or the electors back to the states,” Hutchinson said, referring to Pence.

When asked if any of the lawmakers disagreed with the idea that the vice president had such authority, Hutchinson said there was no objection from any of the Republican lawmakers.

Pressure from lawmakers and the White House on the Justice Department is among several areas of inquiry in the Jan. 6 investigation. Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Democratic member of the panel from Maryland, has hinted there are more revelations to come.

Georgia man 2nd rioter convicted of seditious conspiracy

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A Georgia man affiliated with the far-right Oath Keepers militia group became the second Capitol rioter to plead guilty to seditious conspiracy for his actions leading up to and through the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection.

The sentencing guidelines for Brian Ulrich, who pleaded guilty on Friday, were estimated to be 5¼ years to 6½ years in prison. He also pleaded guilty to obstructing an official proceeding.

Authorities say Ulrich participated in encrypted chats with other people affiliated with the Oath Keepers in the days before the riot, rode toward the Capitol with others in golf carts on that day, marched on

the grounds in a military “stack” formation, taunted police officers who were guarding the building and also entered the Capitol as hundreds of former President Donald Trump's supporters sought to block the certification of President Joe Biden's victory. Asked by the judge whether he was pleading guilty because he was in fact guilty of the charges, Ulrich answered, “Yes, your honor.”

Ulrich, 44, from Guyton, Ga., agreed to cooperate with authorities investigating the riot, including testifying before a grand jury.

The seditious conspiracy prosecution is the boldest publicly known attempt so far by the government to prosecute those who attacked the U.S. Capitol. The group's founder,

Stewart Rhodes, and eight others have pleaded not guilty to seditious conspiracy and other charges. Those charged with seditious conspiracy are accused of working together to use force to stop the peaceful transfer of presidential power. Authorities say participants discussed their plans in encrypted chats, traveled to Washington from across the country, organized into teams, used military tactics, stashed weapons in case they felt they were needed and communicated with each other during the Jan. 6 riot.

Ulrich is the second person to plead guilty to seditious conspiracy. Joshua A. James of Arab, Ala., pleaded guilty to the charge last month.



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

Brian Ulrich, a Georgia man affiliated with the Oath Keepers militia group, on Friday became the second Capitol rioter to plead guilty to seditious conspiracy for his actions leading up and through the attack.

NATION

Vegas reaching for more water as lake dries up

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A massive drought-starved reservoir on the Colorado River has become so depleted that Las Vegas now is pumping water from deeper within Lake Mead where other states downstream don't have access.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority announced last week that its Low Lake Level Pumping Station is operational, and released photos of the uppermost intake visible at 1,050 feet above sea level at the lake behind Hoover Dam.

"While this emphasizes the seriousness of the drought conditions, we have been preparing for this for more than a decade," said Bronson Mack, water authority spokesman. The low-level intake allows Las Vegas "to maintain access to its primary water supply in Lake Mead, even if water levels continue to decline due to ongoing drought and climate change conditions," he said.

The move to begin using what had been seen as an in-case-we-need-it hedge against taps run-

ning dry comes as water managers in several states that rely on the Colorado River take new steps to conserve water amid what has become a perpetual drought.

"We don't have enough water supplies right now to meet normal demand. The water is not there," Metropolitan Water District of Southern California spokesperson Rebecca Kimitch said last week. The agency told some 6 million people in sprawling Los Angeles, Ventura and San Bernardino counties to cut their outdoor watering to one day a week, effective June 1, or face stiff fines.

The surface level of another massive Colorado River reservoir, Lake Powell, dipped below a critical threshold in March — raising concerns about whether Glen Canyon Dam can continue generating power for some 5 million customers across the U.S. West.

Lake Mead and Lake Powell upstream are the largest human-made reservoirs in the U.S., part of a system that provides water to more than 40 million people, tribes, agriculture and industry in



CHASE STEVENS, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL/AP

Southern Nevada Water Authority maintenance mechanics, from left, Jason Dondoy, Patrick Smith and Tony Mercado install a spacer flange after removing an energy dissipator at the Low Lake Level Pumping Station (L3P3) at Lake Mead National Recreation Area on Wednesday, outside of Las Vegas.

Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and across the southern border in Mexico.

In Arizona, falling Colorado River levels have prompted an emphasis on conservation and raised fears of reduced water deliveries to desert areas that include metro Phoenix, Tucson, tribal lands and farms.

At Lake Mead, the new pumps are fed by an intake drilled nearer to the bottom of the lake and completed in 2020 to ensure the ability to continue to draw water for Las Vegas, its casinos, suburbs and 2.4 million residents and 40 million tourists per year.

The "third straw" draws drinking water at 895 feet above sea level — below a point at which water would not be released downstream from Hoover Dam.

Together, the pipeline and pump projects cost more than \$1.3 billion. Drilling began in 2014, amid projections that the lake level would continue to fall due to drought. Increasingly dry conditions in the region are now attributed to long-term climate change.

Lake Mead, between Nevada and Arizona, reached its high-water mark in July 1983, at 1,225 feet above sea level. On Friday, the level was 1,055 feet — about 30%

full. Some of the steepest cliffs bordering the lake show 170 feet of white mineral "bathtub ring."

"Without the third intake, Southern Nevada would be shutting its doors," said Pat Mulroy, former longtime chief of the Las Vegas-based water authority, who is now a consultant. "That's pretty obvious, since the first straw is out of the water."

The authority maintains that the Las Vegas water supply is not immediately threatened. It points to water conservation efforts that it says since 2002 have cut regional consumption of Colorado River water by 26% while the area population has increased 49%.

3 meteorology students killed in crash while returning from Kan. tornado trip

Associated Press

WICHITA, Kan. — A tornado that barreled through parts of Kansas destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes and buildings, injured several people and left more than 15,000 people without power, officials said Saturday.

In addition to wreckage from the tornado itself, three University of Oklahoma meteorology students traveling back from storm chasing in Kansas were also killed in a crash Friday evening, according to officials.

Nicholas Nair, 20, of Denton, Texas; Gavin Short, 19, of Grayslake, Ill.; and Drake Brooks, 22, of Evansville, Ind., died in the crash shortly before 11:30 p.m. Friday, according to an Oklahoma Highway Patrol report.

The three were in a vehicle being driven by Nair southbound on Interstate 35 when the vehicle hydroplaned and was struck by a tractor-trailer rig in Tonkawa, about 85 miles north of Oklahoma City, the report said.

A statement released by OU

said: "The university is devastated to learn of the tragic passing of three students. Each were valued and loved members of our community."

More than 1,000 buildings were affected when a strong twister swept through Andover on Friday evening, according to authorities. In the daylight Saturday, emergency crews found a more widespread path of destruction than was earlier estimated.

"We now know that our damage path extended approximately 3½ to 4 miles to the north of where we believed it to have ended last night," Andover Deputy Fire Chief Mike Roosevelt said at a briefing.

There were no reported fatalities or critical injuries from the tornado itself, despite the widespread destruction. Officials said only a few injuries had been reported. In Sedgwick County, three people were injured, including one woman who sustained serious injuries.

Search and rescue operations

continued Saturday with more than 200 emergency responders from 30 agencies. Officials kept volunteers away from the damage until a secondary search of debris is done.

Andover Fire Chief Chad Russell said earlier that some neighborhood homes "were completely blown away."

City Hall, the Andover YMCA and Prairie Creek Elementary School were among buildings heavily damaged.

Field crews from the National Weather Service worked Saturday to determine the extent and strength of the twister, said meteorologist Kevin Darmofal at the Wichita office.

Gov. Laura Kelly declared a State of Disaster Emergency for the hardest-hit areas.

In addition to the tornadoes, large hail was reported in several towns across the Plains. Hail the size of softballs was spotted near Holbrook, Neb., and Enterprise, Kan., according to the National Weather Service and storm spotters.

Bulldozers, aircraft used to fight fire near NM city

BY PAUL DAVENPORT

Associated Press

Over 1,000 firefighters backed by bulldozers and aircraft battled the largest active wildfire in the U.S. on Saturday after strong winds pushed it across some containment lines and closer to a small city in northern New Mexico.

Mapping imagery indicated the fire that has burned at least 166 homes grew in size from 103 square miles Friday to 152 square miles by early Saturday, officials said. The fire was described as 30% contained during a briefing Saturday evening.

Ash carried 7 miles through the air fell on Las Vegas, population about 13,000, and firefighters were trying to prevent the blaze from getting closer, said Mike Johnson, a spokesperson with the fire management team.

Calmer winds on Saturday aided the firefighting effort after gusts accelerated the fire's advance to a point on Friday when "we were watching the fire march about a mile every hour," said Jay-

son Coil, a fire operations official.

But more extreme fire danger was forecast for Sunday for parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Colorado, according to the National Weather Service. Fire managers warned of windy conditions in the coming days and impacts from smoke, and officials urged residents to remain vigilant for further possible evacuation orders.

Stewart Turner, a fire behavior analyst with the fire management team, warned of a "very serious week" ahead with the forecasted winds.

Winds in northern New Mexico gusted up to 65 mph Friday before subsiding as nightfall approached. By Saturday, aircraft that dump fire retardant and water could resume flights to aid ground crews and bulldozers.

The fire's rapid growth Friday forced crews to repeatedly change positions because of threatening conditions but they managed to immediately re-engage without being forced to retreat, Coil said. No injuries were reported.

NATION

Roast served at correspondents' dinner

BY FARNOUSH AMIRI
AND WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House press corps' annual gala returned Saturday night along with the roasting of Washington, the journalists who cover it and the man at the helm: President Joe Biden.

The White House Correspondents' Association dinner, sidelined by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, featured Biden as the first president in six years to accept an invitation. Donald Trump shunned the event while in office.

"Just imagine if my predecessor came to this dinner this year," Biden told an audience of 2,600, among them journalists, government officials and celebrities. "Now that would really have been a real coup."

The president took the opportunity to test out his comedic chops, making light of the criticism he has faced in his 15 months in office while taking aim at his predecessor, the Republican Party and the members of the press.

"I'm really excited to be here tonight with the only group of Americans with a lower approval rating than I have," Biden said to the Hilton ballroom filled with members of the media.

Biden also made light of the



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

President Joe Biden laughs as he listens to Trevor Noah, host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," speak at the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner, Saturday, in Washington.

"Let's Go Brandon" slogan, which has become the right's stand-in for swearing at the president.

"Republicans seem to support one fella, some guy named Brandon," Biden said, causing an uproar of laughter among the crowd. "He's having a really good year. I'm happy for him."

As far as roasting the GOP, he

said, "There's nothing I can say about the GOP that Kevin McCarthy hasn't already put on tape."

He also took a jab at Fox News. "I know there are a lot of questions about whether we should gather here tonight because of COVID. Well, we're here to show the country that we're getting through this pandemic. Plus, everyone has to prove they are fully

vaccinated and boosted," Biden said. "Just contact your favorite Fox News reporter. They're all here. Vaccinated and boosted."

In addition to speeches from Biden and comedian Trevor Noah, the hourslong event had taped skits from talk-show host James Corden, comedian Billy Eichner and even Biden himself.

"Thank you for having me

here," Noah said to Biden. "And I was a little confused on why me, but then I was told that you get your highest approval ratings when a biracial African guy is standing next to you."

While the majority of the speech was filled with cutting jabs, Biden did make note of the important role journalism plays in American democracy, especially in the last decade.

"I mean this from the bottom of my heart, that you, the free press, matter more than you ever did in the last century," he said. "You are the guardians of the truth."

The dinner had other serious moments, with tributes to pioneer journalists of color, aspiring student reporters as well as a dedication to the journalists detained, injured or killed during the coverage of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The premier event for news media in Washington, the correspondents' dinner mixed Washington journalists like CNN's Jake Tapper and MSNBC's Joy-Ann Reid with celebrities Kim Kardashian, Pete Davidson, Brooke Shields, Caitlyn Jenner, Drew Barrymore and Martha Stewart. Among the large swath of government officials and other prominent figures was Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

NYC aims to keep its outdoor lifestyle

BY BOBBY CAINA CALVAN
Associated Press

NEW YORK — As COVID-19 ravaged New York City, virus-wary denizens locked out of indoor public places poured into the streets, sidewalks and parks. They dined with friends in outdoor sheds hastily erected by restaurants, and went to health classes, concerts and even therapy sessions on streets closed to traffic.

Now as the city continues on its path of recovery, the pandemic could be leaving a lasting imprint on how the city uses its roadways: More space for people and less room for cars.

Even though indoor dining has resumed in the city — no masks or vaccine cards required — outdoor dining decks, set up in former parking lanes, have never been more plentiful.

Meanwhile, the city is expanding its Open Streets program, which closes roadways to vehicles



JOHN MINCHILLO/AP

People walk through an area where restaurants operate outdoor spaces for dining that spread onto sidewalks and streets as part of continued COVID-19 economic impact mitigation efforts, Oct. 3, 2020, in New York.

and opens them to pedestrians.

The expansion of the program — originally conceived as a way to give New Yorkers more space to exercise — is partly intended to increase foot traffic along struggling business corridors and give lower-income neighborhoods similar opportunities as higher-profile and wealthier enclaves.

"There have been a lot of closings of things during COVID. There are sections of blocks where there's lots and lots of empty storefronts, and that's depressing," said Maura Harway, who

lives in Manhattan's Upper West Side. "So anything that brings people back and helps the businesses and helps the neighborhood to feel alive and lively."

New York City officials and restaurateurs alike say that the outdoor dining shacks helped lure diners back to restaurant tables and helped save the jobs of more than 100,000 workers.

For now, the city's reimagining of outdoor dining remains in flux because of legal challenges by some who balk at the loss of parking spaces.

Grammy-winning star Naomi Judd dies at 76

BY KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Naomi Judd, whose family harmonies with daughter Wynonna turned them into the Grammy-winning country stars The Judds, has died. She was 76.

Her daughters, Wynonna and Ashley, announced her death on Saturday in a statement provided to The Associated Press.

"Today we sisters experienced a tragedy. We lost our beautiful mother to the disease of mental illness," the statement said. "We are shattered. We are navigating profound grief and know that as we loved her, she was loved by her public. We are in unknown territory."

Naomi Judd died near Nashville, Tenn., said a statement on behalf of her husband and fellow singer, Larry Strickland. It said no further details about her death would be released and asked for privacy as the family grieves.

The Country Music Hall of Fame will continue with a planned induction ceremony for The Judds on Sunday.

"Naomi overcame incredible

adversity on her way to a significant place in music history. Her triumphant life story overshadows today's tragic news," said

Hall of Fame CEO Kyle Young in a statement. "Her family has asked that we continue with The Judds' official Hall of Fame induction on Sunday. We will do so, with heavy hearts and weighted minds. Naomi and daughter Wynonna's music will endure."

They had also just announced an arena tour to begin in the fall, their first tour together in over a decade.

The mother-daughter performers scored 14 No. 1 songs in a career that spanned nearly three decades. The red-headed duo combined the traditional Appalachian sounds of bluegrass with polished pop stylings, scoring hit after hit in the 1980s.

"Music is the bridge between mom and me, and it bonds us together," Wynonna Judd told the AP. "Even in the not easy times."



Judd

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Funeral home director charged in remains cases

CA LOS ANGELES — A Los Angeles funeral home owner illegally left the remains of 11 people, including infants, in stages of decay and mummification and faces more than a decade in jail, prosecutors said.

Authorities opened an investigation into the Mark B. Allen Mortuary and Cremations Services Inc., after receiving complaints from families.

Allen faces 22 misdemeanor charges — two for each person — from the state's Health and Safety Code. The maximum penalty is \$110,000 and 11 years in jail.

City Attorney Mike Feuer, whose office can only file misdemeanor offenses, announced the charges, calling it an “incredibly sad and shocking situation.”

Mensa members asked to test new board games

ME SOUTH PORTLAND — Makers of board games are seeking the smarty seal of approval at a round-the-clock event.

The 2022 American Mensa Mind Games are underway at a hotel in South Portland, Maine, where hundreds of intellectually gifted individuals are getting a crack at new board games during a three-day event.

Out of 65 games submitted for evaluation, five will be chosen for the “Mensa Select” seal of approval, the Bangor Daily News reported. Past winners include Scattergories, Trivial Pursuit and Taboo.

“I’ve been looking forward to this for three years,” Kimberly Kohler, of Illinois, told the Daily News. “My goal is to absolutely forget about the rest of the world for a few days and just play board games.”

Fireball spotted over 3 states, NASA confirms

MS PORT GIBSON — A loud boom prefaced a streaking fireball spotted in three Southern states, scientists confirmed.

More than 30 people in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi reported seeing the exceptionally bright meteor in the sky around 8 a.m. Wednesday after hearing loud booms in Claiborne County, Miss., and surrounding areas, NASA reported. It was first spotted 54 miles above the Mississippi River, near Alcorn, Miss., officials said.

The object, which scientists called a bolide, moved southwest at a speed of 55,000 mph, breaking into pieces as it descended deeper into Earth's atmosphere. It disintegrated about 34 miles above a swampy area north of the unincorporated Concordia Parish community of Minorca in Louisiana.

One witness told the Vicksburg Post that she heard a loud noise



ROBERTO E. ROSALES, THE ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL/AP

The Gathering of Nations

Maurice Begay competes in the Gathering Of Nations Pow Wow at Tingley Coliseum, on Friday, in Albuquerque, N.M.

and then looked up and saw an “orange fireball the size of a basketball, with a white tail behind it,” heading west toward the Mississippi River.

Middle school student faces bomb charge

IN VALPARAISO — A northwestern Indiana middle school student faces a charge of possessing a destructive device after two improvised explosive devices were found inside a backpack, authorities said.

A Union Township Middle School administrator notified a resource officer about potential explosive devices in the student's backpack, Porter County Police Cpl. Benjamin McFalls said.

The officer and administrators relocated classrooms of students near the backpack and secured the area until the Porter County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad arrived, McFalls told The (Northwest Indiana) Times.

City files lawsuit over collapsed arches

NC HICKORY — A North Carolina city is suing three companies over the collapse of decorative, 40-ton wooden arches along a pedestrian walkway in February.

The lawsuit was filed by the city of Hickory in Catawba County Superior Court, the Hickory Daily

THE CENSUS

19 The number of cannons discovered in the Savannah River likely sunk in 1779 from British ships during the American Revolution. The mud- and rust-encrusted guns were discovered by accident. A dredge scooping sediment from the riverbed last year as part of a \$973 million deepening of Savannah's busy shipping channel surfaced with one of the cannons clasped in its metal jaws. The crew soon dug up two more. Now officials with the U.S. and British governments, as well as the state of Georgia, are working together on an agreement to preserve the newly found guns before putting them on display.

Record reported. It names Neill Grading & Construction Co., Mooresville-based subcontractor Dane Construction and Oregon-based arch manufacturer Western Wood Structures.

The city contends that the arch collapse “could not and would not have occurred in the absence of negligence by one or more of the defendants.”

The arches fell on Feb. 18, more than six months after being installed.

There had been issues when the second arch was being installed last year after part of the wood had splintered, city officials said. It was repaired using a combination of adhesives, clamps and screws.

Man steals ambulance, leads police on chase

IL CHICAGO — A man has been charged with stealing a Chicago Fire Department ambulance and leading police on an 80-mile chase.

The 46-year-old Chicago man

entered the ambulance as it sat empty and parked on the street outside a fire station, police said.

Officers pursued the ambulance down Interstate 55 while the driver sped away at more than 70 mph. About two hours later, a tire on the ambulance blew out and the driver tried to run away, but he was arrested after a short foot chase, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

The man was charged with fleeing from police, resisting arrest and possession of a stolen vehicle, Illinois State Police said.

Council bans newspapers from City Hall lobby

WA SPOKANE — The Spokane Valley City Council in eastern Washington in an unusual move has banned newspapers from the City Hall lobby.

The council voted 4-2 to prohibit third-party publications from the lobbies of City Hall and the Spokane Valley Police Precinct, The Spokesman-Review reported.

The decision most notably affects free newspapers owned by council member Ben Wick, and one that runs advertisements.

Mayor Pam Haley and council members Rod Higgins, Arne Woodard and Laura Padden said the ban was necessary, with some arguing the papers can't be on city property because they contain campaign ads and election coverage.

State sues Family Dollar over rodents in facility

AR LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas is suing Family Dollar over the discovery of more than 1,000 rodents in a distribution facility in the state that prompted the discount retail chain to recall items purchased from hundreds of stores in the South.

The lawsuit, filed by Attorney General Leslie Rutledge in state court, accuses the chain and parent company Dollar Tree of deceiving consumers, negligence and engaging in a conspiracy that allowed the infestation at the West Memphis facility to occur.

“This misconduct by Family Dollar Stores and Dollar Tree allowed them to maximize profits, while causing Arkansas citizens to purchase hazardous, adulterated and contaminated products,” the lawsuit said.

From The Associated Press

NATION

Black doctors say they face racial discrimination

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dr. Dare Adewumi was thrilled when he was hired to lead the neurosurgery practice at an Atlanta-area hospital near where he grew up. But he says he quickly faced racial discrimination that ultimately led to his firing and has prevented him from getting permanent work elsewhere.

His lawyers and other advocates say he's not alone, that Black doctors across the country commonly experience discrimination, ranging from microaggressions to career-threatening disciplinary actions. Biases, conscious or not, can become magnified in the fiercely competitive hospital environment, they say, and the underrepresentation of Black doctors can discourage them from speaking up.

"Too many of us are worried about retaliation, what happens when you say something," said Dr. Rachel Villanueva, president of the National Medical Association, which represents Black doctors. "We have scores of doctors that are sending us letters about these same discriminatory practices all the time and seeking our help as an association in fighting that."

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, Black doctors made up just 5% of active physicians in the U.S. in 2018, the most recent data available. People who identify as Black alone represent 12.4% of the total U.S. population, according to the 2020 U.S. census. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 8.1% of students enrolled in medical schools identified as Black alone. The medical school association and the National Medical Association in 2020 announced an initiative to address the scarcity of Black men in medicine — they made up only 2.9% of 2019-2020 enrolled students.

The American Medical Association, the country's largest, most influential doctors' group, is also trying to attract Black students to medicine, working with historically Black colleges and universities and helping secure scholarships, president Dr. Gerald Harmon said.

"We're trying to put our money where our mouth is on this and our actions where our thoughts are," he said, acknowledging that, among other things, a shortage of Black physicians contributes to

poorer health outcomes for Black patients.

Some Black doctors who believe they've been mistreated are speaking out. Adewumi, 39, filed a federal lawsuit in September against Wellstar Medical Group and Wellstar Health Systems alleging employment discrimination based on race.

Dr. Stella Safo, an HIV specialist, is among a group of past and present employees at the Arnhold Institute for Global Health at Mount Sinai in New York City who in April 2019 sued alleging sex, age and race discrimination. Some claims have been dismissed but others are moving forward. Safo's claims focus on alleged gender discrimination, but she said that, as a Black woman, race and gender discrimination are intertwined. Since filing the lawsuit, she's heard from a lot of people with similar stories.

Adewumi's allegations don't surprise her: "It's what many of us have gone through directly," she said.

Several Black doctors in Georgia and elsewhere who spoke to The Associated Press said the hierarchy and competition in hospi-



MIKE STEWART/AP

Dr. Dare Adewumi — shown on March 15 in Atlanta — says after he was hired to lead the neurosurgery practice at Wellstar Cobb Hospital in Austell, Ga., he faced racial discrimination that ultimately led to his firing and has prevented him from getting work elsewhere.

tals, where surgeons are evaluated and compensated based on productivity, can lead to people being targeted if they aren't liked or are perceived as professional threats. Racial bias can compound that, they said.

Adewumi suspects that's what happened to him. Before arriving

at Wellstar, he'd done two fellowships on spine and brain tumors, learning difficult techniques that others within the neurosurgery group couldn't do. Additionally, his presence at Wellstar Cobb meant lucrative surgeries were no longer being referred to his colleagues at Wellstar Kennestone.

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WORLD

9 arrested after building collapses in central China

Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese police arrested a building owner and eight other people Sunday, two days after the structure collapsed, leaving dozens trapped or missing, police and state media said.

Police in the city of Changsha said they had also arrested three people in charge of design and construction and five others for what they said was a false safety assess-

ment for a guest house on the fourth to sixth floors.

A woman was rescued, taken to a hospital and is in stable condition, state broadcaster CCTV said Sunday, bringing the total rescued to six. About 20 remained trapped, and another 39 had not been accounted for as of late Saturday.

In photos the building appeared to have pancaked down to about the second floor,

leaving rubble strewn on the sidewalk.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the building had eight floors, including a restaurant on the second floor, a cafe on the third floor and residences on the top two floors. Other media reports said it was a six-story building. Tenants had made structural modifications to the building, but the cause of the collapse remained under investigation, Xinhua said.

Police said the Hunan Xiangda Engineering Testing Co. issued the false safety report on April 13. The arrested included the legal representative of the company and four technicians suspected of providing the assessment.

Poor adherence to safety standards, including the illegal addition of extra floors and failure to use reinforcing iron bars, is often blamed for such disasters.

May Day rallies in Europe honor workers, protest governments



LaPresse/AP

Demonstrators participate in a May Day march organized by CGIL, CISL and UIL Lombardia trade unions, in Milan, Italy, on Sunday.

By Elaine Ganley

Associated Press

PARIS — Citizens and trade unions in cities around Europe were taking to the streets on Sunday for May Day marches, and to put out protest messages to their governments, notably in France where the holiday to honor workers was being used as a rallying cry against newly reelected President Emmanuel Macron.

May Day is a time of high emotion for participants and their causes, with police on the ready. Turkish police moved in quickly

in Istanbul and encircled protesters near the barred-off Taksim Square — where 34 people were killed in 1977 during a May Day event when shots were fired into the crowd from a nearby building.

On Sunday, police detained 164 people for demonstrating without permits and resisting police at the square, the Istanbul governor's office said. At a site on the Asian side of Istanbul, a May Day gathering drew thousands, singing, chanting and waving banners, a demonstration organized by the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions

of Turkey.

In Italy, after a two-year pandemic lull, an outdoor mega-concert was set for Rome with rallies and protests in cities across the country. Besides work, peace was an underlying theme with calls for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine.

Other protests were planned far and wide in Europe, including in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, where students and others planned to rally in support of Ukraine as Communists, anarchists and anti-European Union groups held their own gatherings.

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Surviving and thriving in film

Showbiz veteran Sophie Marceau gives rom-com French flair in 'I Love America'

BY STEPHEN SCHAEFER
Boston Herald

Quintessentially French, Sophie Marceau gets laughs, sympathy, perhaps even a little envy, as a single Parisian approaching 50 and looking for love in "I Love America," a French and English romantic comedy that debuted Friday on Amazon.

Marceau became an overnight star back home in a 1980 teen comedy. She was 14.

In the '90s she was internationally famous starring opposite Mel Gibson in his Oscar-winning best picture "Braveheart" and Pierce Brosnan's 007 in "The World Is Not Enough."

Today, Marceau has credits covering nearly four decades. Because of ad campaigns and her work as a cultural ambassador, she is instant-

ly recognizable in Japan, Korea and China.

Does Marceau, 55, rightly embody that phrase we hear every so often: a showbiz survivor?

"Actually, I can say that," Marceau said in English in a Zoom interview from Paris, "but 'survivor' sounds a little bit dramatic. It can be dramatic, actually really be dramatic. And we see it more and more now with the social network and everything.

"But fame? I think it's the best school ever. If you go through it, you can go through a lot of (expletive)."

Among the very few to have been famous since childhood, how did she not just survive but thrive?

"When you are pushed in the water, you have to swim. Otherwise?" she said with a Gallic shrug. "I'm not saying it was easy, but it was a



VIANNEY LE CAER, INVISION/AP

Sophie Marceau, shown at the international film festival at Cannes, France, in 2021, stars as a woman looking for love and dealing with the death of a parent in her new Amazon film.

big thing. It was like a nuclear bomb in my life and it's still there. It's interesting. It's totally surprising as well.

"But you have to make it your choice to make it livable for yourself and for people around you. You learn very quickly when you are that young and something that big happens to you. It's a very good school that. A hard one."

As Lisa in Amazon's buoyantly French romantic comedy, Marceau has a French gay best bud in the City of Light who encourages her to try online dating.

She has come to L.A. following the death of her mother, a complicated woman whom no one would ever call an ideal parent — and which becomes a major focus of the film.

"That relationship of a parent and child is really complicated," said Marceau, who with a son and daughter would know.

"And when you get 50 you think about that. When you lose your parents, you think about that. You really think about all your life — and I think that is worth making a movie about it."

Wallen slated to perform on TV for 1st time since scandal

From wire reports

The Morgan Wallen comeback train is picking up speed.

The 28-year-old country singer will perform on next month's Billboard Music Awards, event organizers announced Friday, his first television gig since he was caught on tape last year drunkenly using the N-word in a video published by TMZ.



Wallen

Wallen's use of the word threatened to derail a fast-moving career: Radio stations pulled his music from the air; his record label "suspended" his contract (without making clear what that meant); and industry groups — including the Country Music Association, the Academy of Country Music and the Recording Academy — disqualified or merely ignored him for major awards.

But Wallen's 2021 "Dangerous: The Double Album" — stuffed with hit singles like "Somebody's Problem," "Sand in My Boots" and "7 Summers," the last of which went viral on TikTok — never stopped connecting with listeners on streaming services like Spotify, and the 30-track collection ended up last year's most-consumed LP.

The 2022 Billboard Music Awards will air live May 15 on NBC from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Parton now says she'll accept Rock Hall nom

About six weeks after Dolly Parton announced on Instagram that she'd declined her nomination for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the country music superstar is singing a different tune.

"I'll accept gracefully," the 76-year-old chart-topper said in a new interview, which aired Friday on NPR's "Morning Edition."

On Feb. 2, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame announced that the "Jolene" singer had been nominated as a finalist for its 2022 class — alongside an impressive list of headliners, including Pat Benatar, Lionel Richie and Carly Simon.

However, to the disappointment of her legions of fans, Parton in March said that she was declining the honor because she felt that she hadn't "earned that right."

Her wish wasn't granted by the Hall, which declined to withdraw her name from induction consideration, adding that "in addition to her incredible talent as an artist, her humility is another reason Dolly is a beloved icon by millions of fans around the world."

Dylan disc to be first in a new high-fidelity format

BY JON BREAM
Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — Leave it to Bob Dylan to promise something special and not give details. And he's got a co-conspirator in celebrated producer T Bone Burnett.

The Grammy- and Oscar-winning producer is behind a new high-fidelity format for listening to music, and he has tapped Dylan to make the inaugural disc of "Ionic Originals."

Burnett, who has long been dissatisfied with the sonic quality of recordings, claims this will be the first breakthrough in analog reproduction in more than 70 years.

There were no details as to when this new disc would be re-



Burnett



Dylan

leased and how to play it — or which Dylan songs would be involved. A news release last week promised that the music legend would revisit "a personally chosen set of his iconic songs for the first time in decades."

"An Ionic Original is the pinnacle of recorded sound," Burnett said in a statement. "It is archival quality. It is future-proof. It is one

of one. Not only is an Ionic Original the equivalent of a painting, it is a painting. It is lacquer painted onto an aluminum disc, with a spiral etched into it by music. This painting, however, has the additional quality of containing that music, which can be heard by putting a stylus into the spiral and spinning it."

With his new company, NeoFidelity, Burnett promises to produce a recording that "possesses a depth, resonance and sonic fidelity that exceeds that of vinyl, CD, streaming or any other means of experiencing recorded music."

Burnett has produced albums by, among others, Dylan, Elvis Costello, Los Lobos, Roy Orbison,

Brandi Carlile and Robert Plant & Alison Krauss. He also has composed and produced music for such movies as "O Brother, Where Art Thou," "The Big Lebowski" and "Crazy Heart."

Meanwhile, Dylan resumes his concert tour behind 2020's heralded "Rough and Rowdy Ways" album on May 28 in Spokane, Wash. He has authored a new book, "The Philosophy of Modern Song," in which he will analyze the songwriting of everyone from Stephen Foster to Nina Simone, due on Nov. 8.

The Bob Dylan Center, a museum housing his personal archives and other artifacts, will open on May 10 in Tulsa, Okla.

James Corden leaving 'The Late Late Show' next year

BY LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

James Corden said he will be bowing out of his late-night CBS TV show next year, calling it a "good time to move on and see what else might be out there."

Corden announced his decision during the taping of April 28's "The Late Late Show," which he began hosting in 2015.

"When I started this journey, it was always going to be just that. It was going to be a journey, an adventure. I never saw it as my final destination, you know?" he said. "And I never want this show to overstay its welcome in any way. I always want to love making it."



Corden

Corden, who didn't offer details on what course his career might take next, said the late-night show "has changed my life. ... I am so proud of what we've achieved. It's been beyond my wildest, wildest dreams."

He'll remain with the show for another year, he said, promising that it will "go out with a bang" and, he predicted, with "so many tears."

In a statement, CBS President and CEO George Cheeks lauded Corden for taking "huge creative and comedic swings," including the

"Carpool Karaoke" videos in which Corden and pop stars including Adele and Paul McCartney performed sing-alongs on the road.

Corden's contract was to expire this August, but the London-born actor and writer extended the agreement for another season. He will leave the show that airs weeknights at 12:37 a.m. Eastern in spring 2023.

"We wish he could stay longer, but we are very proud he made CBS his American home and that this partnership will extend one more season on 'The Late Late Show,'" Cheeks said.

The network had no further comment, including on who might replace Corden. The show's previous host was Craig Ferguson.

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As COVID evolves, China's obstinance grows

BY DAVID VON DREHLE

The Washington Post

Folks who don't believe in evolution have never met the virus that causes COVID-19. Because viruses replicate by the billions daily, they reveal the processes of random genetic variation and natural selection with all the immediacy of a time-lapse film. The virus we met more than two years ago is not the same devil driving infections in the wrong direction today.

Humans evolve far more slowly than viruses do. But we, too, have a gift for survival. It's called learning. And it bears some important similarities to physical evolution. New ideas are like genetic mutations, and the open exchange — the testing and probing — of new ideas is analogous to natural selection.

Both operations thrive on volume. More strains of virus inevitably produce more mutations, increasing the chance that a variant will prove superior in some way to the existing strain. Likewise, an open system of inquiry inevitably produces a wider variety of ideas, increasing the chance that one of them will blossom into discovery or understanding.

This is one way of thinking about the pandemic. In the last weeks of 2019, there was one version of the novel virus and essentially zero human knowledge about it. A race between viral evolution and human learning has brought us, in spring 2022, to a very different place. We now know a lot about a virus that adapts rapidly to our best efforts. Vaccines and antiviral drugs, discovered through open, dynamic inquiry, have made COVID-19 a far less deadly disease — even as evolution has made the underlying virus more contagious.

Unfortunately, there is another pandemic

story, and it threatens to disrupt the world economy, perhaps permanently. China's largest city and busiest trading hub, Shanghai, has been locked down tight for about a month to fight a relative handful of infections. Despite severe government censorship, horror stories have spread of severe food shortages and squalid quarantine centers in this wealthy and modern city of more than 25 million people. Meanwhile, the slowdown at the port has thrown another wrench into the \$22 trillion flow of international trade.

Other large cities in China are locked down as well, affecting some 373 million people in all, more than the entire population of the United States. Together, the idled areas generate 40% of China's economic output. To all the other storms buffeting the world's vitality — the Ukraine crisis, U.S. inflation, sky-high fuel costs — add the likelihood that China is sending itself into a recession.

Speculation that Beijing will be next to shut down has sent inhabitants of the Chinese capital on a fevered hunt for scarce supplies. Grocery stores are being stripped as quickly as they can be restocked. Millions of residents have waited in long lines for mandatory testing.

The virus has evolved, but China appears to have learned nothing from the world's fight against COVID. In pursuit of the impossible goal of "zero COVID," leader Xi Jinping commands a rigid, top-down approach to the disease.

Keen observers, such as Eyck Freymann writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, worry that draconian measures will continue indefinitely, at great cost to China and the world, because Xi cannot afford to change his mind. To abandon the zero COVID policy "would require the Communist Party to countermand an order that it has repeatedly and unequivocally given for more than two years,"

Freymann wrote. "This not only would be an admission of failure, it would badly delegitimize Mr. Xi's carefully constructed herocult."

We see something tragically similar in Russia. There, President Vladimir Putin persists in his bloody, costly attempt to crush independent Ukraine, unable to countenance fresh thinking that might limit the self-inflicted damage.

Authoritarian governments look strong from the outside, unburdened by the noise and mess of partisan competition and free enterprise. But, eventually, they fall prey to this inherent weakness: By centralizing decisions and cutting off debate, they render themselves unable to learn and grow. Ideas come from a single source, the leader, rather than bubbling up from the wisdom of the crowd. Once spoken, the fiats cannot change without wounding the leader's credibility. Authorities confuse the silence of stifled dissent for confirmation that they are correct.

One challenge for the United States and allied democracies is to appreciate the dynamic power in our often unruly debates. By dissenting from authority, by questioning established dogma, by challenging expert opinions, we foster the creation of ideas and test those ideas to find the strongest ones.

Xi's declared purpose in pursuing his "zero COVID" policies is to prove that China's one-party, all-powerful surveillance state is superior to Western models based on human rights. But he is fighting the 2022 virus with early 2020 techniques, which is likely to be an expensive failure. If this sounds like another version of the same old totalitarian tale — well, there's a reason.

Some people never learn.

Washington Post columnist David Von Drehle is the author of "Triangle: The Fire That Changed America."

Garland is right to resist calls to indict Trump

BY RAMESH PONNURU

Bloomberg Opinion

Some of the same people who once considered Merrick Garland a martyr to Republican villainy now consider him a disappointment, or worse, as attorney general. What they want him to do, most of all: Indict former President Donald Trump. Garland should keep disappointing them.

University of Michigan law professor Barbara McQuade, a former U.S. attorney, has made the most thorough case for indictments. Trump pressured Vice President Mike Pence to block congressional certification of Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential race. Trump engaged in this pressure campaign even though many people — including federal judges, state officials and his own advisers — had indicated that he lost the election, the widescale fraud he kept invoking had not occurred, and the Constitution now demanded that Biden take office.

This course of behavior, McQuade argues, broke two laws. It was a corrupt attempt to obstruct or impede an official proceeding, and it was a conspiracy to defraud the U.S.

McQuade acknowledges that "charging Trump criminally could have profoundly negative consequences for our country," including "violent protests and civil unrest." But she concludes it would be worse to let him skate. Applauding her analysis, *Washington Post* columnist Jennifer Rubin said that if Garland

does not act on it, he should resign or be fired.

Federal Judge David Carter made much the same argument as McQuade in a March 28 ruling. Ordering Trump legal adviser John Eastman to turn over documents to the House committee on the Jan. 6 riot, Carter found that Eastman and Trump "more likely than not" engaged in obstruction and conspiracy to defraud. Trump's behavior was shameful and impeachable. It is a pity that the country did not form a consensus against it strongly enough to sustain a congressional vote to disqualify him from future office. Whether he should be indicted for it is a different question. There are three reasons to refrain.

First, prosecuting the case would mean proving beyond a reasonable doubt that Trump knew he had lost the election and Eastman's legal theories were bunk. The evidence that McQuade and Carter have produced leaves room for that doubt. Trump regularly speaks as though he believes things that he has ample reason to believe are false. That Trump was entirely sincere in believing his bonkers claims about the election would be his best strategy in court.

The next problem is the awkwardness, and possible folly, of applying broadly written statutes in a way that implicates separation-of-powers concerns that were remote from anyone's contemplation when they were adopted by the framers of the Constitution. This could also be the basis for a legal challenge to a prosecution. The Supreme Court

has ruled that the Administrative Procedures Act does not apply to the president even though it includes no explicit exemption for any member of the executive branch.

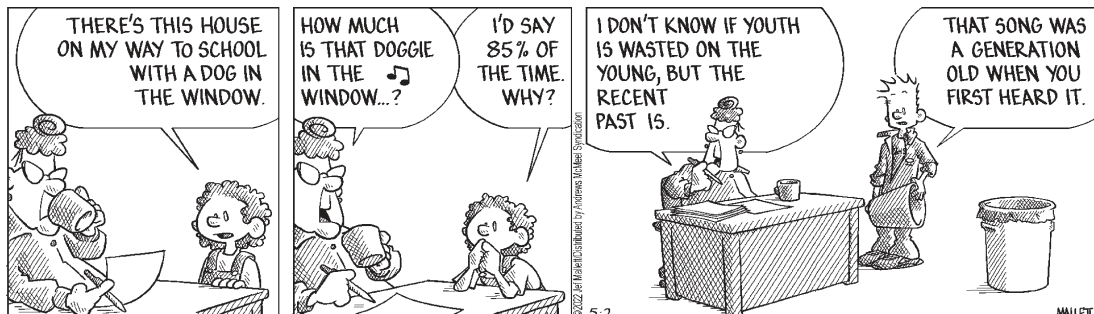
The statutes that would be used against Trump include no exemption for members of Congress, either. It's not hard to picture the tables being turned. What if, next year, Republicans control Congress and launch investigations of the Biden administration? What if Democrats decide these are political stunts and do what they can to slow down the Republicans? Would they then be impeding or obstructing an official proceeding? If Trump gets indicted under the theory now being advanced, the odds that Republicans would say so approach 100%. Each party is already too eager to criminalize the other's politics.

The third drawback to indicting Trump: It would be more dangerously divisive even than McQuade, to her credit, concedes. His supporters should not, of course, get a veto over a well-grounded prosecution. But they would be all the more zealous in his defense because there would be serious arguments against this prosecution. And the strife would worsen as the parties engaged in escalating tit-for-tat prosecutorial excess.

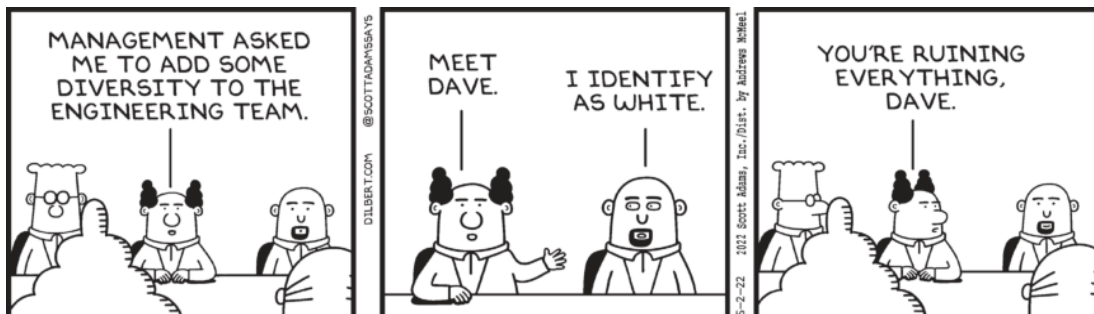
Garland's caution, then, could be a form of statesmanship rather than cowardice.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Ramesh Ponnuru is the editor of *National Review* and a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

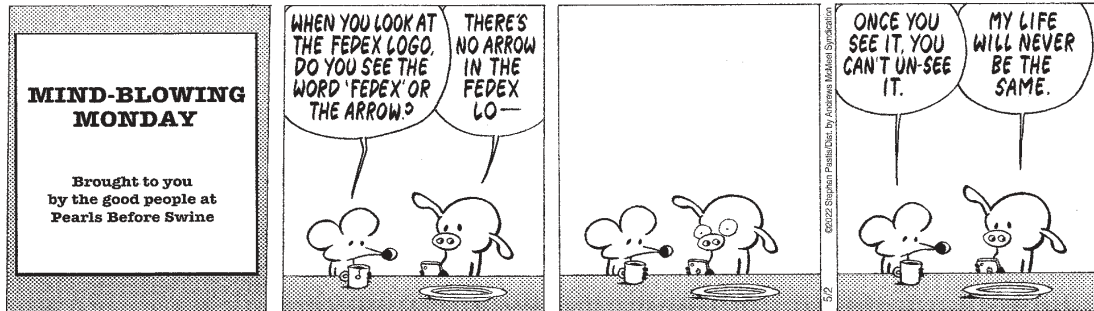
Frazz



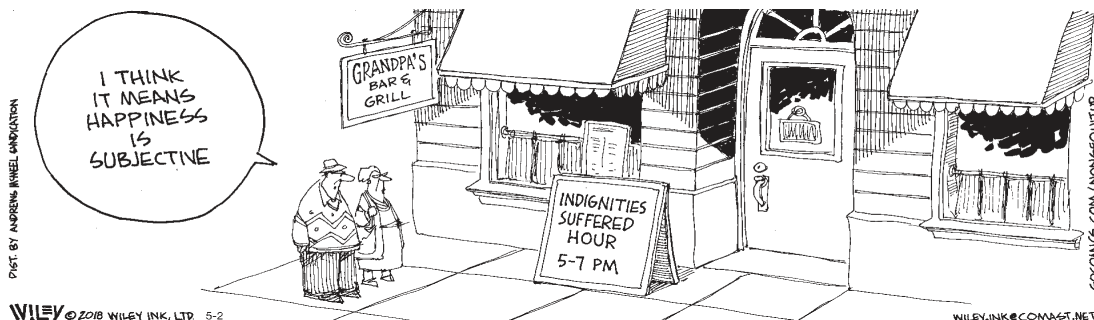
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



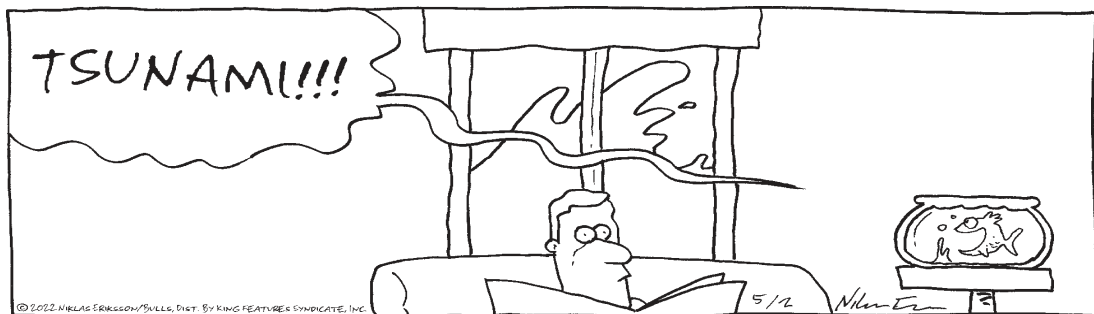
Non Sequitur



Candorville



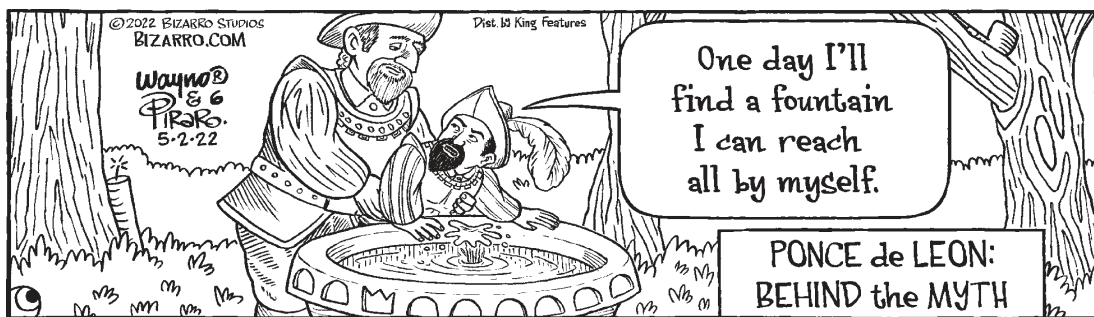
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15			16							17		
			18				19		20			
21	22	23					24					
25				26		27		28			29	30
31			32		33		34		35			
36				37		38		39		40		
			41		42		43		44			
45	46						47					
48				49		50				51	52	53
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

ACROSS

- 1 "What was I thinking?"
- 4 Military group
- 9 Hardly any
- 12 — de cologne
- 13 Inventor Howe
- 14 Chopper
- 15 Player with no contract
- 17 Co. unit
- 18 Compass dir.
- 19 Erase
- 21 Roof beam
- 24 Start a garden
- 25 Clean air org.
- 26 Use a straw
- 28 Heat setting
- 31 Barbie, e.g.
- 33 Annex
- 35 Did the crawl
- 36 Took off
- 38 Valentine's Day mo.
- 40 Wanted poster abbr.
- 41 Medicinal plant
- 43 Kid's coloring stick
- 45 Epitomize
- 47 Old Olds
- 48 Extinct bird
- 49 Warning device
- 54 Blunder
- 55 Finished
- 56 Chinese chairman

- 57 Bottom line
- 58 Quaint oath
- 59 Sound booster

- 21 Some wines
- 22 Per person
- 23 Go to pieces
- 27 Adobe file format
- 29 Shark variety
- 30 One-named supermodel
- 32 Caron title role
- 34 Commanded
- 37 Brittle candy
- 39 Bakery loaves
- 42 Sizing up
- 44 ISP giant
- 45 Fed. agents
- 46 Days gone by
- 50 Vitamin stat
- 51 Docs' bloc
- 52 Ewe's mate
- 53 Unruly hair

DOWN

- 1 Dict. info
- 2 Rowboat need
- 3 Shade
- 4 Stops
- 5 Neighbor of Libya
- 6 Conk out
- 7 South African money
- 8 Honor
- 9 Gradually disappeared
- 10 Way out
- 11 "— Only Just Begun"
- 16 Ballpark fig.
- 20 Floral rings

Answer to Previous Puzzle

V	A	C		I	M	A	N		S	T	A	N
A	S	H		D	A	N	A		L	A	L	A
I	T	E		A	C	A	I		A	F	A	R
N	O	R	T	H	A	T	L	A	N	T	I	C
				H	O	W		G	I	G		
T	E	X	A	S		F	U	R		P	O	D
M	E	O	W		B	A	N		F	O	R	E
Z	O			G	I	T		S	O	I	L	S
				S	A	T		T	W	O		
S	O	U	T	H	C	A	R	O	L	I	N	A
E	G	G	O		O	L	I	O		M	I	T
A	R	L	O		I	B	M	S		A	N	A
N	E	I	L		N	A	S	H		M	O	D

5-2

CRYPTOQUIP

KQB TI TZIQBDD NGH YD TA
 BUIQBOB TVYZYHATHR HV T
 ZBQITYA OBUYZTA OBTI RYDG:
 ITOTWB QYAKNTWR.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: I EXPECT THAT IF LEGENDARY ACTRESS BRIGITTE HAD A PREFERRED WINE, IT WOULD BE BARDOT BORDEAUX.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals M

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MLB

Scoreboard

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	15	6	.714	—
Toronto	14	8	.636	1½
Tampa Bay	12	9	.571	3
Boston	9	13	.409	6½
Baltimore	7	14	.333	8

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	12	9	.571	—
Cleveland	9	12	.429	3
Chicago	8	12	.400	3½
Kansas City	7	12	.368	4
Detroit	7	13	.350	4½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	14	8	.636	—
Houston	11	10	.524	2½
Seattle	11	10	.524	2½
Oakland	10	11	.476	3½
Texas	7	14	.333	6½

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	15	7	.682	—
Miami	12	8	.600	2
Philadelphia	11	11	.500	4
Atlanta	10	12	.455	5
Washington	7	16	.304	8½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	15	7	.682	—
St. Louis	11	9	.550	3
Pittsburgh	9	12	.429	5½
Chicago	8	13	.381	6½
Cincinnati	3	18	.143	11½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	14	7	.667	—
Los Angeles	13	7	.650	½
San Diego	14	8	.636	½
Colorado	12	9	.571	2
Arizona	10	12	.455	4½

Saturday's games

Toronto 2, Houston 1
 Cleveland 3, Oakland 1
 Chicago White Sox 4, L.A. Angels 0
 Minnesota 9, Tampa Bay 1
 Miami 3, Seattle 1
 Texas 3, Atlanta 1
 Baltimore 2, Boston 1, 10 innings
 N.Y. Yankees 3, Kansas City 0
 Detroit 5, L.A. Dodgers 1
 Arizona 2, St. Louis 0
 San Francisco 9, Washington 3
 Pittsburgh 7, San Diego 6, 10 innings
 Milwaukee 9, Chicago Cubs 1
 Colorado 4, Cincinnati 3
 Philadelphia 4, N.Y. Mets 1

Sunday's games

Boston at Baltimore
 Minnesota at Tampa Bay
 Houston at Toronto
 Seattle at Miami
 L.A. Angels at Chicago White Sox
 N.Y. Yankees at Kansas City
 Atlanta at Texas
 Cleveland at Oakland
 Detroit at L.A. Dodgers
 San Diego at Pittsburgh
 Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee
 Arizona at St. Louis
 Cincinnati at Colorado
 Washington at San Francisco
 Philadelphia at N.Y. Mets

Monday's games

L.A. Angels (Sandoval 1-0) at Chicago
 White Sox (Cease 2-1)
 Kansas City (Greinke 0-1) at St. Louis
 (Matz 2-1)
 Minnesota (Paddock 0-2) at Baltimore
 (Wells 0-2)
 N.Y. Yankees (Montgomery 0-1) at Toronto
 (Stripling 0-0)
 Seattle (Gonzales 1-2) at Houston (Odo-
 rizzi 1-2)
 Tampa Bay (Rasmussen 1-1) at Oakland
 (Jeffries 1-3)
 Arizona (Gallen 0-0) at Miami (López 3-0)
 Atlanta (TBD) at N.Y. Mets (Bassitt 3-1)

Tuesday's games

San Diego at Cleveland
 Texas at Philadelphia
 Minnesota at Baltimore
 N.Y. Yankees at Toronto
 L.A. Angels at Boston
 Pittsburgh at Detroit
 Chicago White Sox at Chicago Cubs
 Seattle at Houston
 St. Louis at Kansas City
 Tampa Bay at Oakland
 Atlanta at N.Y. Mets, 2
 Arizona at Miami
 Cincinnati at Milwaukee
 Washington at Colorado
 San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers

ROUNDUP

Marlins win 7th straight game

Luzardo outduels Ray in 3-1 victory over Mariners

Associated Press

MIAMI — Jesús Luzardo allowed one run and two hits in six innings and the Miami Marlins won their seventh straight game, beating the Seattle Mariners 3-1 on Saturday night.

Brian Anderson had two hits for the Marlins, whose last seven-game win streak ran from April 24-30, 2016.

Luzardo (2-1) struck out five and walked one in his longest outing of the season.

“I just wanted to get ahead and attack the hitters,” Luzardo said. “I feel that’s the biggest adjustment I’ve made this year. My stuff was working in the zone. I didn’t want to fall behind in the count and give the hitters the edge.”

Mariners starter Robbie Ray cruised through the first four innings before running into trouble in a 36-pitch fifth inning. The reigning AL Cy Young Award winner allowed RBI singles to Bryan De La Cruz and Jon Berti and walked three, including Garrett Cooper with the bases loaded.

“(Ray) was unbelievable tonight,” said Anderson, who began the fifth-inning rally with a double. “He didn’t make many mistakes and when he did, we were ready. The way our pitching has been going, any offense that we can put together it seems to give us a whole lot of confidence.”

Ray (1-2) was lifted after five innings. He gave up three runs, four hits, struck out eight and walked four.

Phillies 4, Mets 1: Kyle Schwarber hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the seventh inning as Philadelphia bounced back from being no-hit by winning at New York.

Mets starter Taijuan Walker and reliever Trevor May blanked



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Miami Marlins pitcher Jesús Luzardo allowed one run and two his in six innings in a 3-1 defeat of the Seattle Mariners on Saturday in Miami.

the Phillies through six innings before J.T. Realmuto drew a one-out walk in the seventh from Adam Ottavino (1-1).

Schwarber followed by homering to right-center field for a 2-1 lead. Alec Bohm walked and scored when Odubel Herrera chased Ottavino with a two-out double. Rhys Hoskins added a homer leading off the eighth.

James Norwood (1-0) struck out one in a perfect sixth. Corey Knebel earned his fourth save.

Tigers 5, Dodgers 1: Javier Báez and Austin Meadows each drove in two runs and Detroit snapped a six-game losing streak with a victory at Los Angeles, spoiling a night when Clayton Kershaw became the Dodgers’ career strikeout leader.

Báez tied it at 1-all in the third inning with a base hit to left and then had the go-ahead double down the right-field line off Evan

Phillips (1-1) in the seventh. Later in the inning, Meadows plated two more runs with a perfectly placed single between third and short that extended the lead to 4-1.

Kershaw began the game needing four to pass Don Sutton as his franchise’s strikeout king. The 33-year-old lefty got Spencer Torkelson to whiff on a slider low and inside for his 2,697th strikeout and move past the Hall of Famer.

Blue Jays 2, Astros 1: George Springer homered twice against his former team, leading José Berrios and host Toronto as it snapped Houston’s four-game win streak.

Springer’s leadoff homer in the first was the 46th of his career. Starting at DH, Springer connected again in the third, the 19th multi-homer game of his career.

Diamondbacks 2, Cardinals 0: Merrill Kelly threw seven shutout innings and Ketel Marte and Nick Ahmed homered in the eighth inning, sending Arizona to a win at St. Louis.

Marte led off the eighth by taking a 1-1 changeup off Miles Mikolas (1-1) into the right field bullpen for his first homer of the season. One out later, Ahmed sent a 1-1 fastball into the left field bullpen for his second homer.

Twins 9, Rays 1: Kyle Garlick hit two home runs off starter Shane McClanahan and Minnesota won at Tampa Bay.

Carlos Correa had three hits for the Twins, who have won eight of nine. Cody Stashak (2-0) got the win in relief.

Guardians 3, Athletics 1: Pinch-hitter Richie Palacios hit a two-out, two-run double in the ninth inning and Cleveland took

advantage of a key error to win at Oakland.

Giants 9, Nationals 3: Jason Vosler homered and Darin Ruf had three hits as host San Francisco overcame the absence of several players due to COVID-19 and beat Washington.

White Sox 4, Angels 0: Tim Anderson and Luis Robert homered to help host Chicago end the LA’s six-game winning streak.

Rangers 3, Braves 1: Corey Seager homered in his third straight game, Dane Dunning allowed one run over a career-high 7½ innings and host Texas beat Atlanta.

Pirates 7, Padres 6 (10): Ke’Bryan Hayes singled in the tying run and scored the winning run on an error as host Pittsburgh scored twice in the bottom of the 10th inning to beat San Diego and snap a four-game losing streak.

Yankees 3, Royals 0: Gerrit Cole pitched six sharp innings and visiting New York won its eighth straight game by manufacturing runs against sloppy Kansas City pitching.

Brewers 9, Cubs 1: Eric Lauer struck out 11 in seven innings as host Milwaukee beat Chicago.

Orioles 2, Red Sox 1 (10): Jorge Mateo scored the winning run in the 10th inning on a throwing error by pitcher Hirokazu Sawamura, capping host Baltimore’s comeback over Boston.

Rockies 4, Reds 3: Chad Kuhl shook off a first-pitch homer by Tyler Naquin and lasted into the eighth inning, Ryan McMahon hit a go-ahead two-run triple in the sixth and Colorado dealt Cincinnati its ninth straight road loss.



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

The Detroit Tigers’ Jeimer Candelario scores on a double by Tucker Barnhart as Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Austin Barnes misses the throw in the Tigers’ 5-1 win Saturday in Los Angeles.

NHL PLAYOFFS

‘Return to normalcy’ for league

Full buildings show NHL is back to pre-COVID-19 playoff attendance levels

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Watching games in empty arenas in the quarantined bubbles during the 2020 playoffs, the 2021 season and even in Canada earlier this year gave Gary Bettman even more of an appreciation for what NHL hockey is like in front of a sellout crowd.

“Our players get an extraordinary amount of energy and excitement from our fans and our full buildings,” the commissioner said.

The Tampa Bay Lightning celebrated their second of back-to-back Stanley Cup championships at home last summer in the middle of a packed house, but that was far from the norm. Their games in Montreal during that final came in front of a paltry crowd of 3,500 at Bell Centre, which is usually a raucous arena.

There won't be playoff hockey there this spring, but in three other Canadian cities and 13 in the U.S., every building is expected to be full this time of year for the first time since 2019. After navigating the twists and turns of the pandemic, the NHL is back to pre-COVID-19 business levels, with the return to regular playoffs being a big reason for the league's furious comeback.

“This is the ultimate return to normalcy,” Bettman said. “To



DARRYL DYCK/AP

The Los Angeles Kings' Dustin Brown, back right, waves to the crowd before leaving the ice after the team's game against the Vancouver Canucks on April 28 in Vancouver, British Columbia. This season, the playoffs will feature full houses for the first time since 2019.

have our full buildings and exciting games, what more could we ask for? Especially after what we've all been through the last two years.”

The NHL projected \$5.2 billion in revenue at its annual Board of Governors meeting in December, with the salary cap set to rise \$1 million next season after remaining flat since 2020. Even after the

surge of the omicron variant of the coronavirus forced teams north of the U.S.-Canada border to play with no fans or limited attendance, the league is on pace to surpass the \$5 billion mark.

“Revenue-wise, we did fine this year,” Bettman said. “We did basically what we were projecting. The impact of having buildings empty in Canada for some period of time

had an impact — material for those clubs — but in terms of the \$5-plus billion were going to do, it was only a very, very small part of that.”

Even before the Cup is handed out before the end of June, that's a big win, especially after losing out on \$3.6 billion when the 2019-20 season was cut short and operating in a deficit to play a shortened, 56-game season in 2021.

Matthews' career year gives Leafs playoff hopes

By **LARRY LAGE**
Associated Press

Auston Matthews is having the best season of his career, and that's quite a feat.

Toronto's No. 1 overall pick from the 2016 NHL draft has lived up to the hype from the start of his rookie year through last season, averaging a little more than a point per game while turning around a long-suffering franchise.

Matthews led the Maple Leafs into the playoffs in each of his first five years in the league after they had been in the postseason only once in the previous 11 years.

The proud franchise, though, has not advanced in the playoffs since 2004, when Matthews was 6 years old. Toronto has played in a decisive playoff game the past four postseasons, and lost each elimination game.

“The scars that leaves behind is the extra motivation, a little extra fire that burns within to go out there and make a difference and have a different outcome,” Matthews said. “Everybody on the team, and everybody in this orga-



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Toronto center Auston Matthews is looking to lead the team into the second round of the playoffs for the first time since 2004.

nization, is confident in one another and extremely motivated to change the narrative and have success come postseason time.

“It's about doing — not talking about it — and I know that this group feels ready.”

It certainly helps the Maple Leafs to have a 24-year-old superstar, perhaps in his prime, leading

the way.

Matthews smashed his career high with 60 goals, reaching the milestone this past week and breaking Rick Vaive's 40-year-old franchise record. He had 106 points in 73 games and has improved as a two-way player, making him a favorite to win his first Hart Trophy as the NHL's MVP.

60

Goals this season for Toronto Maple Leafs center Auston Matthews, a career and franchise high, surpassing Rick Vaive's Maple Leafs record of 54, set in the 1981-82 season.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Toronto, not coincidentally, has set franchise records for wins and points before its highly anticipated postseason appearance begins Monday against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

“We were a good team last season and felt we made positive moves in the offseason to add to our depth,” Maple Leafs coach Sheldon Keefe said. “Our players are a year older, have come together and continued to grow their game to find greater consistency in their habits and execution. We've also seen significant improvements this season on both the power play and penalty kill that have helped us win a lot of games.”

Toronto has scored on a league-

Scoreboard

First round

(Best-of-7; x-if necessary)
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Carolina vs. Boston

Monday: at Carolina. **AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m. Tuesday CET, 8 a.m. Tuesday JKT**
Wednesday: at Carolina

Friday: at Boston
Sunday, May 8: at Boston
x-Tuesday, May 10: at Carolina
x-Thursday, May 12: at Boston
x-Saturday, May 14: at Carolina

N.Y. Rangers vs. Pittsburgh

Tuesday: at N.Y. Rangers
Thursday: at N.Y. Rangers
Saturday, May 7: at Pittsburgh
Monday, May 9: at Pittsburgh
x-Wednesday, May 11: at N.Y. Rangers
x-Friday, May 13: at Pittsburgh
x-Sunday, May 15: at N.Y. Rangers

Toronto vs. Tampa Bay

Monday: at Toronto
Wednesday: at Toronto
Friday: at Tampa Bay
Sunday, May 8: at Tampa Bay
x-Tuesday, May 10: at Toronto
x-Thursday, May 12: at Tampa Bay
x-Saturday, May 14: at Toronto

Florida vs. Washington

Tuesday: at Florida
Thursday: at Florida
Saturday, May 7: at Washington
Monday, May 9: at Washington
x-Wednesday, May 11: at Florida
x-Friday, May 13: at Washington
x-Sunday, May 15: at Florida

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Calgary vs. Dallas

Tuesday: at Calgary
Thursday: at Calgary
Saturday, May 7: Calgary at Dallas
Monday, May 9: Calgary at Dallas
x-Wednesday, May 11: Dallas at Calgary
x-Friday, May 13: Calgary at Dallas
x-Sunday, May 15: Dallas at Calgary

Edmonton vs. Los Angeles

Monday: at Edmonton
Wednesday: at Edmonton
Friday: at Los Angeles
Sunday, May 8: at Los Angeles
x-Tuesday, May 10: at Edmonton
x-Thursday, May 12: at Los Angeles
x-Saturday, May 14: at Edmonton

Colorado vs. Nashville

Tuesday: at Colorado
Thursday: at Colorado
Saturday, May 7: at Nashville
Monday, May 9: at Nashville
x-Wednesday, May 11: at Colorado
x-Friday, May 13: at Nashville
x-Sunday, May 15: at Colorado

Minnesota vs. St. Louis

Monday: at Minnesota. **AFN-Sports2, 3:30 a.m. Tuesday CET, 10:30 a.m. Tuesday JKT**

Wednesday: at Minnesota
Friday: at St. Louis
Sunday, May 8: at St. Louis
x-Tuesday, May 10: at Minnesota
x-Thursday, May 12: at St. Louis
x-Saturday, May 14: at Minnesota

best 30% of its power plays after ranking 16th in the NHL last year. The Maple Leafs rank among NHL leaders in penalty killing after being among the worst a season ago.

Matthews isn't on the ice often in short-handed situations, but he has become enough of a defensive forward that he get some votes for the Selke Award.

His goal-scoring has put him in a position to win his second straight Richard Trophy, lighting the lamp the most in the league, to join Steve Stamkos (2012) and Alex Ovechkin (2008) as the only 60-goal scorers this century.

“Auston has been a prolific scorer since coming into the league so it should be no surprise that as he's gotten older, he's raised the bar,” Keefe said earlier this week. “Off-season surgery (in mid-August) solved the discomfort he had most of last season with his wrist, so that has helped him feel better and shoot with greater confidence and strength.”

AP Hockey Writers Stephen Whyno and John Wawrow contributed.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

Playoffs

FIRST ROUND (Best-of-seven)

Eastern Conference Philadelphia 4, Toronto 2

Philadelphia 131, Toronto 111
Philadelphia 112, Toronto 97
Philadelphia 104 Toronto 101, OT
Toronto 110, Philadelphia 102
Toronto 103, Philadelphia 88
Philadelphia 132, Toronto 97

Miami 4, Atlanta 1

Miami 115, Atlanta 91
Miami 115, Atlanta 105
Atlanta 111, Miami 110
Miami 110 Atlanta 86
Miami 97, Atlanta 94

Boston 4, Brooklyn 0

Boston 115, Brooklyn 114
Boston 114, Brooklyn 107
Boston 109, Brooklyn 103
Boston 116, Brooklyn 112

Milwaukee 4, Chicago 1

Milwaukee 93, Chicago 86
Chicago 114, Milwaukee 110
Milwaukee 111, Chicago, 81
Milwaukee 119, Chicago 95
Milwaukee 116, Chicago 100

Western Conference Memphis 4, Minnesota 2

Minnesota 130, Memphis 117
Memphis 124, Minnesota 96
Memphis 104, Minnesota 95
Minnesota 119, Memphis 118
Memphis 111, Minnesota 109
Memphis 114, Minnesota 106

Golden State 4, Denver 1

Golden State 123, Denver 107
Golden State 126, Denver 106
Golden State 118, Denver 113
Denver 126, Golden State 121
Golden State 102, Denver 98

Dallas 4, Utah 2

Utah 99, Dallas 93
Dallas 110, Utah 104
Dallas 126, Utah 118
Utah 100, Dallas 99
Dallas 102, Utah 77
Dallas 98 Utah 96

Phoenix 4, New Orleans 2

Phoenix 110, New Orleans 99
New Orleans 125, Phoenix 114
Phoenix 114, New Orleans 111
New Orleans 118, Phoenix 103
Phoenix 112, New Orleans 97
Phoenix 115, New Orleans 109

CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS (Best-of-seven)

x-if necessary Eastern Conference

Boston vs. Milwaukee

Sunday: at Boston
Tuesday: at Boston
Saturday: at Milwaukee
Monday, May 9: at Milwaukee
x-Wednesday, May 11: at Boston
x-Friday, May 13: at Milwaukee
x-Sunday, May 15: at Boston

Miami vs. Philadelphia

Monday: at Miami; **AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Tuesday CET; 8:30 a.m. Tuesday JKT**
Wednesday: at Miami
Friday: at Philadelphia
Sunday, May 8: at Philadelphia
x-Tuesday, May 10: at Miami
x-Thursday, May 12: at Philadelphia
x-Sunday, May 15: at Miami

Western Conference Phoenix vs Dallas

Monday: at Phoenix; **AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. Tuesday CET; 11 a.m. Tuesday JKT**
Wednesday: at Phoenix
Friday: at Dallas
Sunday, May 8: at Dallas
x-Tuesday, May 10: at Phoenix
x-Thursday, May 12: at Dallas
x-Sunday, May 15: at Phoenix

Memphis vs. Golden State

Sunday: at Memphis
Tuesday: at Memphis
Saturday: at Golden State
Monday, May 9: at Golden State
x-Wednesday, May 11: at Memphis
x-Friday, May 13: at Golden State
x-Sunday, May 15: at Memphis



FRANK GUNN/AP

76ers center Joel Embiid missed 10 games after suffering a left orbital fracture in 2018.

Healthy Warriors face rebuilt Grizzlies

BY TERESA M. WALKER

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Splash Brothers Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson have the Golden State Warriors in their seventh Western Conference semifinal in 10 seasons, and both finally are as healthy as they've been since reaching five straight NBA Finals from 2015-19.

That remarkable run started when the Warriors rallied from a 2-1 deficit in the second round against Memphis in 2015, marking a big switch in the direction for both franchises.

Ja Morant has the rebuilt Grizzlies back in the West semis for the first time in seven years. The dynamic guard leads a young and deep roster that edged out Golden State for the No. 2 seed in the West with the NBA's best record behind only Phoenix.

And Memphis can't wait to see how it matches up with the veteran-led, playoff-tested Warriors.

"We feel like we are one of the best backcourts in the league as well," Morant said. "So, going into any matchup, we're taking ourselves over anybody. We're very confident. We put in the work."

The third-seeded Warriors, rested with three days off since ousting Denver on Wednesday night, know what they want starting Sunday afternoon in Game 1.

"We've been around the block, and we're trying to get back to the mountaintop and understand the opportunity in front of us," Curry said Saturday before Golden State left San Francisco.

The Grizzlies earned the No. 8 seed a year ago after beating San Antonio, then going on the road to



JED JACOBSON/AP

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) and Draymond Green, back, celebrate during Game 5 of the team's first-round playoff series against the Denver Nuggets in San Francisco on Wednesday.

beat the Warriors in the play-in tournament. Memphis took three of four in the regular season with Thompson playing only once, Draymond Green playing two and Curry averaging 36.3 points in his three games.

Comeback Grizzlies

The Grizzlies are still playing because they play their best in the final 12 minutes. They're the first team in NBA history to post multiple comeback victories when trailing by double digits going into the fourth quarter, and they did it three times ousting Minnesota.

They outscored the Timber-

wolves 198-136 in the final quarter, finishing the series with a 40-22 edge in the fourth of Game 6. Memphis ended the game on a 17-7 run. The Grizzlies not only lead the NBA scoring 33 points in the fourth quarter this postseason, they also top the league in that quarter, making 45.3% of their threes.

In the paint

Golden State believes it can defend any big man after getting past Denver star Nikola Jokic in the first round — even if the 7-foot reigning MVP averaged 31 points, 13.2 rebounds and 5.8 assists over

the five-game series.

Now, the Warriors take on Memphis, which led the NBA in rebounding during the regular season — and only Milwaukee has hit the boards better this postseason, with the Grizzlies averaging 46.3 per game.

Green and Kevon Looney handled the defensive load against Jokic with help from guards Gary Payton II, Thompson and even Curry. The next challenge on the block is Xavier Tillman and Brandon Clarke with Steven Adams — the league's top rebounder on the offensive boards — still out in the health and safety protocols.

Hope: Embiid's injury changes complexion of series

FROM PAGE 24

just no timeline for when he's coming back."

The Heat went from 4.5-point favorites in Game 1 to 8.5-point favorites, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, after the 76ers announced Embiid's latest injuries. But there were no outward signs of celebration in Miami on Saturday because of Embiid's absence.

Quite the contrary, actually.

"I feel bad for my guy," said Heat forward Jimmy Butler, who played with Embiid in Philadelphia. "Obviously, one of my former teammates. Arguably, the MVP of this league. And I think I speak for everybody that's a part of this team — we want Jo to play. We want to go up against them at full strength and prove that we can hang with anybody and we can beat anybody."

Losing Embiid would be difficult enough for the 76ers under any circumstances. That it hap-



RIVERS

pened with a 29-point lead and 3:58 left in a game that had essentially been decided only makes it worse. Rivers bristled at criticism of why he had Embiid in the game at that point. Philadelphia's lead was never smaller than 18 in the fourth quarter on Thursday, was still 25 with 5 minutes to play and had reached 29 on back-to-back baskets by Tobias Harris and Embiid.

Rivers said the Raptors still had their starters in, and that he was about to call time to sub out his starters when the lead reached 29. He also said that in one-sided closeout games, that would be about the time where benches get cleared.

"Not upset that he was in," Rivers said. "You can make that a big

deal if you want. Just go and look at every team, and every game, and their guys were in until about the 4:00, 3:00 mark."

Embiid went through a similar issue — orbital fracture and concussion — in 2018 and missed 10 games, plus needed surgery because of the fracture. The 76ers have not mentioned surgery as a possibility this time around, which would seem to raise the possibility that Embiid could be back more quickly than he was four years ago.

The concussion would be the first hurdle to clear, and it's anyone's guess when Embiid would escape those protocols anyway. If Embiid does play in this series, it would seem likely that he'd have to don a protective mask — something he did four years ago and didn't exactly enjoy.

"Obviously, tough news to take," Harris said. "As a group, we want him to get healthy and better.

And whenever that is, we'll be ready."

Embiid led the 76ers with averages of 30.6 points, 11.7 rebounds and assists and 1.5 blocks per game during the regular season. And even though he's bothered by a right thumb ligament injury that will require offseason surgery, he also averaged 26.2 points and 11.3 rebounds in the six games against the Raptors.

He's one of three finalists for MVP, along with Denver's Nikola Jokic and Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo.

"I think it'll change all of our roles, honestly," said Philadelphia center DeAndre Jordan, who now seems likely to have a bigger role in the Miami series. "You can't replace the MVP. He's averaging 30 and whatever for the season, and he's extremely dominant, has been during these playoffs in the first round. So it's going to be hard to replace that."

SPORTS



Pandemic on ice?

NHL sees return to pre-COVID attendance for playoffs » **Page 22**

NBA PLAYOFFS

'There's hope'

Sixers waiting to see if MVP candidate Embiid can return

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
Associated Press

The best that Philadelphia coach Doc Rivers could offer Saturday about Joel Embiid's possible availability for the Eastern Conference semifinal series against Miami was a two-word answer. "There's hope," Rivers said. For now, Philadelphia will cling to that.

The 76ers and Heat both hit the practice floor Saturday to begin the process of adjusting for a playoff series that won't have Embiid at the start — at minimum. Embiid, the NBA's scoring champion and an MVP finalist this season, has a right orbital fracture and a mild concussion, injuries that were suffered Thursday in a first-round series-clincher at Toronto and were announced Friday night.

Game 1 is Monday in Miami. And the 76ers will be without their center who averaged 30 points per game this season.

"I don't know how you make up for it, but you figure out how to," Rivers said. "Yeah, I mean, it's just a tough injury. The good news, I guess, is he's had it before. The bad news is there's

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INSIDE

Healthy Warriors squaring off with young, brash Grizzlies
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Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, the league scoring champion and an MVP finalist this season, sustained a right orbital fracture and concussion during Thursday's first-round series-clincher against the Raptors in Toronto.

MATT SLOCUM/AP



Day 3 of NFL Draft focuses on kickers, RBs » **Page 20**

