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FBI/AP

FBI special agents assigned to the evidence response team process material recovered from the high altitude balloon recovered off the coast of South Carolina, on Feb. 9, at the FBI laboratory in Quantico, Va.

Philippines: China used laser on coast guard

By JIM GOMEZ
Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines on Monday accused a Chinese coast guard ship of hitting a Philippine coast guard vessel with a military-grade laser and temporarily blinding some of its crew in the disputed South China Sea, calling it a “blatant” violation of Manila’s sovereign rights.

The Chinese ship also maneuvered dangerously close, about 449 feet, to block the Philippine patrol vessel BRP Malapascua from approaching Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef that has been occupied by Philippine forces, on Feb. 6, the Philippine coast guard said in a statement.

The Philippines has filed nearly 200 diplomatic protests against China’s aggressive actions in the disputed waters in 2022 alone.

China claims the South China Sea virtually in its entirety, putting it on a collision course with other claimants. Despite friendly overtures to Beijing by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his successor, Ferdinand

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PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD/AP

A green military-grade laser light from a Chinese coast guard ship is seen in the disputed South China Sea, on Monday.

Unprecedented in peacetime

US shot down 4 unknown objects over 8 days in ‘heightened alert’

By COLLEEN LONG,
LOLITA C. BALDOR
AND ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. fighter jet shot down an “unidentified object” over Lake Huron on Sunday on orders from President Joe Biden. It was the fourth such downing in eight days and the latest military strike in an extraordinary chain of events over U.S. airspace that Pentagon officials believe has no peacetime precedent.

Part of the reason for the repeated shoot-downs is a “heightened alert” following a spy balloon from China that emerged over U.S. air-

RELATED

China says more than 10 US balloons flew in its airspace in past year
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space in late January, Gen. Glen VanHerck, head of NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, said in a briefing with reporters.

Since then, fighter jets last week also shot down objects over Canada and Alaska. Pentagon officials said they posed no security

threats, but so little was known about them that Pentagon officials were ruling nothing out — not even UFOs.

“We have been more closely scrutinizing our airspace at these altitudes, including enhancing our radar, which may at least partly explain the increase,” said Melissa Dalton, assistant defense secretary for homeland defense.

U.S. authorities have made clear that they constantly monitor for unknown radar blips, and it is not unusual to shut down airspace as a precaution to evaluate them. But the unusually assertive response was raising questions about

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MILITARY

‘It’s a must-have’

With Russia in mind, US soldiers bolster air defense in Europe

By PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Short-range missile defense was a prominent part of U.S. Army strategy in Europe for several decades, until it became an afterthought with the end of the Soviet Union and the rise of counterinsurgency warfare elsewhere.

But with Russia unleashing missile barrages on Ukrainian cities and neighboring U.S. allies concerned about projectiles flying over their borders, the soldiers of the 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment training at Grafenwoehr, the Army’s largest training area in Europe, find their mission back in the spotlight.

In recent days, the Ansbach-based brigade has been practicing here to certify their gunnery skills on the maneuver short-range air defense system.

It is seeking to become the world’s first all-M-SHORAD unit with technology well beyond what Cold War soldiers used but perhaps familiar-looking to their grandkids. During the training, soldiers learned to use a device that looks like an Xbox controller.

“I wouldn’t necessarily say it’s difficult, but there is a lot of information that we have to take in,” vehicle commander Sgt. Elijah Ryan said in describing the system, while 30 mm cannons boomed over the snow-covered fields.

SHORAD is used to protect ground troops from cruise missiles, drones and other low-flying aircraft.

While air defense modernization became a priority in the years



YESENIA CADAVID/U.S. Army

M-SHORAD platoon leader 2nd Lt. Marina Delmoro, left — shown with Sgt. Lamar Begay and Staff Sgt. Robert O'Donnell — is looking forward to the activation of an additional short-range air defense battalion.

after Russia illegally annexed Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula in 2014, officials say the Kremlin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year has bluntly made the case for greater air defense capacity, especially in Europe.

“In the past, we took air superiority for granted,” Tom Karako, the director of the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said during a recent interview. “We have been rudely disabused of that idea now.”

Karako was referring to the wide range of air and missile threats on display in Ukraine, adding that in the present climate, short-range air defense “is not something nice to have; it’s a must-have.”

The U.S. had little need for air defense during its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq because of its air superiority. As a result, the Army inactivated most of its SHORAD units and transferred their equipment to the National Guard.

Although SHORAD is generally viewed as equally important as medium- and long-range air defense, the Army has a larger short-



PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN/Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Cody Reichard trains on the maneuver short-range air defense, or M-SHORAD system, at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, on Thursday.

range capacity gap that it needs to address. That’s where the soldiers training at Grafenwoehr come in.

The battalion is upgrading from the Avenger, a Humvee-based system that was developed in the 1980s. The more advanced M-SHORAD consists of a Stryker armored fighting vehicle equipped with a stinger missile launcher, an XM914 30 mm cannon, an M240 machine gun and a sophisticated radar system.

It provides more protection for those inside the vehicle than the Avenger does, and the soldiers using it described it as more accurate, lethal and maneuverable.

As soldiers learn to operate the machine, they give feedback to manufacturers in the U.S. For example, Ryan said he wasn’t completely happy with how a switch works for tracking targets on those Xbox-like controllers.

In recent months, the U.S. provided four Avenger systems to Ukraine. U.S. soldiers trained over a dozen Ukrainian counterparts on

the systems at Grafenwoehr, spokesman Maj. Robert Fellingham told Stars and Stripes.

The systems must be integrated with others to provide maximum protection. For the U.S., this means merging its capabilities with those of other NATO partners.

Since arriving in Europe, most troops with the 4th ADA regiment have been sent with Avengers to countries on NATO’s eastern flank.

M-SHORAD platoon leader 2nd Lt. Marina Delmoro deployed to Germany just two weeks before she was sent last March to Lithuania, where people were wary of the Ukraine conflict spilling into their territory.

Delmoro is looking forward to the activation of an additional short-range air defense battalion, likely to happen this fall, to help meet the growing SHORAD demand.

The 1st Battalion, 57th Air Defense Artillery Regiment also will

be based in Ansbach. It will be an Avenger battalion for a few years before a planned change to the indirect fire protection capability, Army officials say. That system works with other air defense methods to defeat rockets and drones, among other threats.

The two Ansbach battalions and a third in Baumholder that specializes in the long-range Patriot system fall under the 52nd Air Defense Artillery Brigade, which was activated last year in Sembach.

It’s expected to be about six months before the soldiers working with the M-SHORADs complete their training and all three dozen systems are in theater, brigade commander Col. Bruce Bredlow said.

“This newest capability is coming to Europe first,” Bredlow said. “This is a sign that we are very committed to Europe and the security of NATO.”

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Army sees safety, not ‘wokeness,’ as top recruiting obstacle

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — While some Republicans blame the COVID-19 vaccine or “wokeness” for the Army’s recruiting woes, the military service says the bigger hurdles are more traditional ones: Young people don’t want to die or get injured, deal with the stress of Army life and put their lives on hold.

They “just don’t see the Army as something that’s relevant,” said Maj. Gen. Alex Fink, head of Army marketing. “They see us as revered, but not relevant, in their lives.”

Addressing those longtime issues has taken on greater urgency as the Army tries to recover from its worst recruiting year in decades, a

situation aggravated by the tight jobs market. The Army is offering new programs, advertising and enticements in an effort to change perceptions and reverse the decline.

One incentive gives recruiters bonuses of up to \$4,500 per quarter if they exceed their baseline enlistment requirement. A pilot program allows young enlisted soldiers — those in the three lower ranks — to get a promotion if they refer someone who enlists and goes to basic training. Only one promotion per soldier is allowed.

The Army fell about 15,000 soldiers, or 25%, short of its 60,000 recruitment goal last year, when all the branches struggled to meet recruiting goals.

Army Secretary Christine Wor-

muth said the Army has set a difficult goal for this year: aiming to bring in 65,000 recruits, which would be 20,000 more than in 2022. It’s difficult to predict how it will go, she said, adding that recruiters need to do all they can to surpass last year’s numbers.

“I would say it is a stretch goal,” she said.

Guiding the Army’s efforts are surveys intended to help pinpoint why young people dismiss the Army as a career.

Those surveys were conducted over four months last spring and summer. They involved about 600 respondents, ages 16 to 28, per month. The Army discussed the general findings with The Associated Press but declined to provide de-

tailed methodology, saying the surveys were done by a private research contractor and that licensing agreements limited the public release of some data collection details.

Officials said that based on the surveys, young people simply do not see the Army as a safe place or good career path, and believe they would have to put their lives and careers on hold if they enlisted.

Army leaders said very few say they are deterred from enlisting due to “wokeness.” In fact, concerns about discrimination against women and minorities is seen as a bigger issue, along with a more general distrust of the military.

“Wokeness” is a slang term that originally described attentiveness

to issues of racial and social justice. Some people and groups, especially conservatives, now use it in a derogatory sense implying what they see as overreactions.

Republicans in Congress, including Rep. Jim Banks, chairman of the House Armed Services subcommittee on military personnel, have pledged to target “wokeness” this year. Banks, R-Ind., has said “exposing and dismantling the Biden administration’s woke agenda that is driving down military recruitment and retention” will be a top priority for him this year.

Banks and others say focusing on partisan issues pushed by the left takes away from the Pentagon’s core missions, weakens the military and turns off recruits.

PACIFIC

Philippines open to having defense pact with Japan

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. says he'd consider a reciprocal military access agreement with Japan to guard his country's fishermen and sea territory amid tension with China.

"If it will be of help to the Philippines in terms of protecting, for example, our fishermen, protecting our maritime territory, if it's going to help, then ... I don't see why we should not adopt it," Marcos said, according to an official transcript of an interview with reporters on his flight back Sunday from a five-day official trip to Tokyo. Philippine officials are assessing whether such an agreement would help their country or worsen tensions in the South China Sea, Marcos said.

"We have to be careful also because we do not want to appear provocative," he said. "That instead of calming the situation in the South China Sea, we would heighten it, right? That's not what we want."

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida "briefly" discussed the concept of a defense pact when the two leaders met on Thursday, Marcos said. That day, the pair signed an agreement that allows Japan to deploy its forces for humanitarian missions and disaster response in the Philippines, The Associated Press reported Friday.

Marcos' comments came 10 days after the United States and the Philippines announced that U.S. forces will gain access to four more bases in the islands. The allies previously agreed that American troops could access five Philippine installations under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Defense cooperation is coalescing amid tension with Beijing in the South China Sea, where China has territorial disputes with many of its neighbors, including the Philippines.

Tokyo has promised to develop infrastructure to help Japanese military deployments to the Philippines, according to Jeff Kingston, a professor of history and Asian studies at Temple University, Japan Campus.

"Both nations see a growing threat from China in disputed territories and waters and the [Philippines] is eager to upgrade its weak military capacity while [Japan] seeks to participate in and shape the emerging regional security architecture," he said in an email Monday.

Marcos' comments will be welcome in Washington, where greater cooperation between its allies and security partners is seen as key to containing China, Kingston said. However, Marcos, like his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, seems hesitant to provoke Beijing, he said.

China has recently pledged \$24 billion of investment in the Philippines against \$5 billion from Japan, although Tokyo is a more welcome partner, Kingston said.

Reciprocal access agreements allow Tokyo to engage with security partners beyond the core U.S.-Japan alliance, according to James Brown, an international affairs expert at Temple University, Japan. Japan has already announced such agreements with Australia and the United Kingdom, Brown said Monday.

"With the South China Sea being a key focus for Japan's security, [a reciprocal access agreement] with a southeast Asian country is an obvious next step," he said.

Marcos may hope that an agreement with Japan won't raise tensions, but Beijing is not likely to see it this way, Brown said.

In a Taiwan crisis, having the Philippines supportive of the U.S. and Japan and allowing military access is a huge advantage, according to retired Marine Col. Grant Newsham, a senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies in Tokyo.

U.S.-Philippine and U.S.-Japan-Philippine maritime patrols would be a good idea, Newsham said in an email Monday.

"Beijing will howl, but if these aren't done the Chinese will gradually establish its control over Philippine maritime territory," he said.

Marcos' comments are consistent with the trajectory of security policy in Manila and Tokyo, according to Brad Glosserman, deputy director and visiting professor at the Center for Rule-Making Strategies at Tama University in Tokyo.

"The question is how long Marcos will stay the course," he said in an email Monday. "China is going to put him under substantial pressure. Will he stand up?"

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JAPAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

This Chinese navy survey vessel entered Japan's territorial waters southwest of Yakushima on Sunday.

Chinese naval vessel enters Japan's territorial waters

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Tokyo lodged a diplomatic complaint with Beijing on Sunday after a Chinese navy vessel entered Japan's territorial waters off the southern tip of its main islands, according to Japanese government statements.

A Shupang-class survey ship crossed the 12-mile territorial limit around Yakushima, an island 40 miles south of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, at approximately 2:30 a.m. Sunday, Japan's Defense Ministry said in a statement that day.

The vessel remained for slightly less than two hours before exiting to the southwest of neighboring Kuchinoerabu island, the statement said.

The survey vessel's intrusion was the first of the year by the Chinese navy, according to the Ministry of Defense website. Shupang-class survey vessels made five intrusions in 2022, according to the ministry.

Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry lodged a complaint with the Chinese Embassy in Japan and with the government in Beijing on Sunday, expressing "strong concern" over the incident, a ministry spokesman said Monday. Some government officials in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

The vessel's intent was unclear, but Japanese authorities were concerned that China has stepped up military activities in the region, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said Monday.

"We will keep paying close attention to the sailing of Chinese navy vessels in our waters and take all the possible measures to conduct vigilant surveillance in the surroundings of our country," Matsuno said at a press conference in Tokyo, according to a video clip uploaded to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's website.

Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force spotted the survey vessel south of Yakushima in the country's contiguous waters, a maritime zone that extends 12 nautical

miles beyond the territorial limit, around 12:50 a.m. Sunday, according to the ministry statement.

The vessel then entered Japan's territorial waters southwest of Yakushima, the ministry said. A P-1 maritime patrol aircraft from Fleet Air Wing 1 at Kanoya Air Base, a P-3C surveillance plane from Fleet Air Wing 5 at Naha and the JS Shirataka, a guided-missile destroyer from Sasebo Naval Base, tracked the Chinese vessel.

Even warships of one country are permitted "innocent passage" through another country's territorial waters under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. The convention spells out exceptions to the rule.

The Chinese vessel exited Japan's territorial waters southwest of neighboring Kuchinoerabu at 4:10 a.m., according to the ministry.

Kuchinoerabu is less than 10 miles northwest of Yakushima.

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Laser: Coast guard says crew temporarily blinded

FROM PAGE 1

Marcos Jr., who met Chinese leader Xi Jinping in January in Beijing, tensions have persisted, drawing in closer military alliance between the Philippines and the U.S.

Although the Chinese coast guard had tried to block Philippine coast guard ships in the disputed waters before, this was the first time it used lasers and caused physical suffering among Filipino personnel, Philippine coast guard spokesperson Commodore Armand Balilo told The Associated Press.

"The Chinese ship illuminated the green laser light twice toward the BRP Malapascua, causing

temporary blindness to her crew at the bridge," the Philippine statement said.

A video issued by the coast guard in Manila shows a Chinese coast guard ship cutting across the path of a Philippine vessel from a distance. A green laser-like light is later emitted by the Chinese ship.

The Philippine military said it's time for China to restrain its forces from committing "any provocative act that will endanger the lives of people."

Spokesman Col. Medel Aguilar told reporters that the Philippine defense chief deemed the Chinese coast guard's action "offensive and unsafe."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign

Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said a Philippine coast guard vessel trespassed into Chinese waters without permission on Feb. 6.

Chinese coast guard vessels responded "professionally and with restraint at the site in accordance with China's law and international law," he said, without elaborating and mentioning the use of laser.

The Philippine vessel was forced to move away from the area, where it was escorting a supply vessel that was delivering food and sailors to a Philippine navy sentry ship, the BRP Sierra Madre, which has been marooned on Second Thomas Shoal since 1999, the coast guard said.

MILITARY

China says US balloons flew in its airspace

Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Monday said more than 10 U.S. high-altitude balloons have flown in its airspace during the past year without its permission, following Washington's accusation that Beijing operates a fleet of surveillance balloons around the world. The United States denied that it operates any surveillance balloons over China.

The Chinese allegation came after the U.S. shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon that had crossed from Alaska to South Carolina, sparking a new crisis in bilateral relations that have spiraled to their lowest level in decades.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin gave no details about the alleged U.S. balloons,

how they had been dealt with or whether they had government or military links.

"It is also common for U.S. balloons to illegally enter the airspace of other countries," Wang said at a daily briefing. "Since last year, U.S. high-altitude balloons have illegally flown over China's airspace more than 10 times without the approval of Chinese authorities."

Wang said the U.S. should "first reflect on itself and change course, rather than smear and instigate a confrontation."

China says the balloon shot down by the U.S. was an unmanned airship made for meteorological research that had been blown off course. It has accused the U.S. of overreacting by shoot-

ing it down and threatened to take unspecified action in response.

In Washington, National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said Monday that any claim that the U.S. government operates surveillance balloons over China is false.

"It is China that has a high-altitude surveillance balloon program for intelligence collection, connected to the People's Liberation Army, that it has used to violate the sovereignty of the United States and over 40 countries across five continents," Watson said.

"This is the latest example of China scrambling to do damage control. It has repeatedly and wrongly claimed the surveillance balloon it sent over the United

States was a weather balloon and to this day has failed to offer any credible explanations for its intrusion into our airspace and the airspace of others."

Following the balloon incident, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a visit to Beijing that many had hoped would put the brakes on the sharp decline in relations over Taiwan, trade, human rights and threatening Chinese actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Adding to tensions, a U.S. fighter jet shot down an "unidentified object" over Lake Huron on Sunday on orders from President Joe Biden. It was the fourth such downing in eight days in an extraordinary chain of events over U.S. airspace that Pentagon offi-

cials believe has no peacetime precedent.

The United States has since placed economic restrictions on six Chinese entities it said are linked to Beijing's aerospace programs as part of its response to the incident.

The U.S. House of Representatives also voted unanimously to condemn China for a "brazen violation" of U.S. sovereignty and efforts to "deceive the international community through false claims about its intelligence collection campaigns."

Wang, the Chinese spokesperson, repeated China's dismissal of such claims, saying, "the frequent firing of advanced missiles by the U.S. to shoot down the objects is an overreaction of overexertion."

Peacetime: Officials say objects posed no security threat

FROM PAGE 1

whether such use of force was warranted, particularly as administration officials said the objects were not of great national security concern and the downings were just out of caution.

VanHerck said the U.S. adjusted its radar so it could track slower objects. "With some adjustments, we've been able to get a better categorization of radar tracks now," he said, "and that's why I think you're seeing these, plus there's a heightened alert to look for this information."

He added: "I believe this is the first time within United States or American airspace that NORAD or United States Northern Command has taken kinetic action against an airborne object."

Asked if officials have ruled out extraterrestrials, VanHerck said, "I haven't ruled out anything at this point."

The Pentagon officials said they were still trying to determine what exactly the objects were and said they had considered using the jets' guns instead of missiles, but it proved to be too difficult. They drew a strong distinction between the three shot down over this weekend and the balloon from China.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz tweeted that airmen in the 148th Fighter Wing, an Air National Guard fighter unit in Duluth, shot down the object over Lake Huron.

The extraordinary air defense activity began in late January, when a white orb the officials said was from China appeared over the U.S. and hovered above the nation for days before fighter jets downed it off the coast of Myrtle Beach, S.C. That event played out over livestream. Many Americans have been captivated by the drama playing out in the skies as



AP

This image provided by the U.S. Navy shows sailors assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 2 recovering a high-altitude surveillance balloon off the coast of Myrtle Beach, S.C., on Feb. 5.

fighter jets scramble to shoot down objects.

The latest brought down was first detected on Saturday evening over Montana, but it was initially thought to be an anomaly. Radar picked it up again Sunday hovering over the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and it was going over Lake Huron, Pentagon officials said Sunday.

U.S. and Canadian authorities had restricted some airspace over the lake earlier Sunday as planes were scrambled to intercept and try to identify the object. According to a senior administration official, the object was octagonal, with strings hanging off, but had no discernible payload. It was flying low at about 20,000 feet, said the official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials were still trying to precisely identify two other objects shot down by F-22 fighter jets, and were working to determine whether China was responsible as concerns escalated about what Washington said was Beijing's large-scale aerial surveillance program.

An object shot down Saturday over Canada's Yukon was described by U.S. officials as a balloon significantly smaller than the balloon — the size of three school buses — hit by a missile Feb. 4. A flying object brought down over the remote northern coast of Alaska on Friday was more cylindrical and described as a type of airship.

Both were believed to have a payload, either attached or suspended from them, according to the officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of ano-

nymity to discuss the ongoing investigation. Officials were not able to say who launched the objects and were seeking to figure out their origin.

The three objects were much smaller in size, different in appearance and flew at lower altitudes than the suspected spy balloon that fell into the Atlantic Ocean after the U.S. missile strike.

The officials said the other three objects were not consistent with the fleet of Chinese aerial surveillance balloons that targeted more than 40 countries, stretching back at least into the Trump administration.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told ABC's "This Week" that U.S. officials were working quickly to recover debris. Using shorthand to describe the objects as balloons, he said U.S. military

and intelligence officials were "focused like a laser" on gathering and accumulating the information, then compiling a comprehensive analysis.

"The bottom line is until a few months ago we didn't know about these balloons," Schumer, D-N.Y., said of the spy program that the administration has linked to the People's Liberation Army, China's military. "It is wild that we didn't know."

Eight days ago, F-22 jets downed the large white balloon that had wafted over the U.S. for days at an altitude of about 60,000 feet. U.S. officials immediately blamed China, saying the balloon was equipped to detect and collect intelligence signals and could maneuver itself. White House officials said improved surveillance capabilities helped detect it.

China's Foreign Ministry said the unmanned balloon was a civilian meteorological airship that had blown off course. Beijing said the U.S. had "overreacted" by shooting it down.

Then, on Friday, North American Aerospace Defense Command, the combined U.S.-Canada organization that provides shared defense of airspace over the two nations, detected and shot down an object near sparsely populated Deadhorse, Alaska.

Later that evening, NORAD detected a second object, flying at a high altitude over Alaska, U.S. officials said. It crossed into Canadian airspace on Saturday and was over the Yukon, a remote territory, when it was ordered shot down by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In both of those incidents, the objects were flying at roughly 40,000 feet.

The object on Sunday was flying at 20,000 feet.

EUROPE

Russia pushes advance on eastern Ukraine

BY SAMYA KULLAB
AND YURAS KARMANAU
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Fierce battles raged outside Bakhmut as Russian forces pushed their advance on the eastern city with heavy shelling and infantry attacks, Ukraine's presidential office said Monday, with at least five civilians killed and as many wounded in action across the war-torn country in the last 24 hours.

The presidential office said the situation in Bakhmut's northern suburb of Paraskoviivka is "difficult" as Russian forces continued to pummel the area with "intense shelling and storming actions." The nearby town of Vuhledar is also under heavy bombardment.

Ukrainian soldiers began training on Leopard 2 battle tanks, Germany's Defense Ministry spokeswoman Nadine Krueger said in Berlin. Germany pledged to deliver 14 of the tanks to Ukraine by the end of March.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg again urged Ukraine's Western allies to ramp up their military support. Asked Monday when he expects Russia's so-called spring offensive to begin, Stoltenberg said that "the reality is that we have seen the start already."

"For me, this just highlights the importance of timing. It's urgent to provide Ukraine with more weapons," he told reporters in Brussels. Stoltenberg said that NATO sees "no sign whatsoever that [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin is preparing for peace" and that arming Ukraine more quickly could save lives by bringing a quicker end to the conflict.

Russian forces shelled a dozen cities and villages in the Donetsk region in the last 24 hours including in Druzhkivka where a missile hit a hospital and in Pokrovsk where shelling damaged seven houses and a kindergarten.

"The shelling intensifies, and the Russians accumulate more forces for an attack on peaceful cities,"

Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said. "We're seeing a very tough battle in which the Russians aren't sparing neither themselves, nor us."

In the neighboring Luhansk region, Russian troops pulled back after several days of intense fighting near the key city of Kreminna, although they're not "running out of steam," Luhansk Gov. Serhii Hai-dai told Ukrainian television.

In the partially occupied southern region of Kherson, artillery fire hit more than 20 cities and villages over the past 24 hours including the regional capital of the same name that was recaptured by Ukrainian forces in November. Two men were killed in one of the villages when their car ran over a land mine.

In the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region, Russian shelling of the city of Nikopol killed one person and wounded two others. The shelling also damaged a residential building, a water treatment facility and a college.

Meanwhile, the U.K. Defense Ministry said Russian forces are bolstering defensive fortifications on the edge of the battlefield in southern Ukraine to protect their flank, despite their focus on the Donbas region.

"This is demonstrated by continued construction of defensive fortifications in Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk oblasts and deployment of personnel," the Ministry said in a briefing Monday.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow issued another warning to U.S. citizens not to travel to Russia for fear of harassment or detention, urged them to leave immediately if they have to travel there.

The warning cited "the potential for harassment and the singling out of U.S. citizens for detention by Russian government security officials, the arbitrary enforcement of local law, limited flights into and out of Russia, the Embassy's limited ability to assist U.S. citizens in Russia, and the possibility of terrorism."



LIBKOS/AP

A Ukrainian soldier walks along a street in Bakhmut, in the country's Donetsk region, on Sunday. The writing on the wall reads "Bakhmut loves Ukraine." The presidential office said the situation in Bakhmut's northern suburb of Paraskoviivka is "difficult" as Russian forces continued to pummel the area.

The embassy also noted that Russian authorities may sweep up U.S. citizens who also hold Russian citizenship in a possible renewed mobilization of reservists. "Russia may refuse to acknowledge dual nationals' U.S. citizenship, deny their access to U.S. consular assistance, subject them to mobilization, prevent their departure from Russia, and/or conscript them," the warning said.

Since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last February, the embassy has regularly issued advisories for U.S. citizens not to travel to Russia and leave if they already have.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied Monday that a second round of mobilization is looming.

Although many people have fled the Donetsk province where the bulk of the fighting is concentrated, those who opted to stay depend on sporadic aid deliveries of food and water.

In the city of Sviatohirsk, in

northern Donetsk, the few residents who remain rely on volunteers with the organization World Central Kitchen for food and supplies to cope with freezing temperatures. Sviatohirsk was liberated by Ukrainian forces in September.

On Sunday, the area was blanketed with snow, concealing the massive destruction from repeated bombardments and heavy fighting.

Standing by the ruins of the city council building, resident Valeriy Andrievskiy said the building used to be "beautiful."

"God forbid our forces retreat and we stay (behind enemy lines). God forbid. I will not survive this one more time," he said.

Walking near the ruins of her home, 80-year-old Tamara Yevdokimova said she had been "tortured" by Russian forces.

"I haven't been able to hear for five months ... They (Russians) have knocked my teeth out. What can I do?" she said. In her yard were the burned out remnants of a Russian tank.

People who left the front lines in search of safety are still struggling to adapt to a new life elsewhere. In Kyiv, dozens of people from the Donbas, Kherson and Kharkiv regions are being helped by Center of Hope and Recovery, an organization that provides temporary homes and meals.

"These are people who have left in the past what they have earned for years, and this is a very traumatic experience," said head of the center Anna Harkun. They receive psychological and medical help, while volunteers help them find work and permanent lodging, she added.

Russian rockets destroyed the home of 80-year-old Anatoly Zakharenko in village Terny in Donetsk. His wife, daughter, and disabled granddaughter were all evacuated and are being helped in the city.

Missing his hometown, he wrote a poem to ease the pain of displacement. "I will return to you, believe me," he said, reading it aloud.

Moldova's president outlines Russian 'plan' to topple government

Associated Press

CHISINAU, Moldova — Moldova's president outlined Monday what she described as a plot by Moscow to use external saboteurs to overthrow her country's government, put the nation "at the disposal of Russia" and derail its aspirations to one day join the European Union.

President Maia Sandu's briefing comes a week after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country had intercepted plans by Russian secret services to destroy Moldova, claims that were later confirmed by Moldovan intelligence officials.

"The plan for the next period in-

volves actions with the involvement of diversionists with military training, camouflaged in civilian clothes, who will undertake violent actions, attack some state buildings, and even take hostages," Sandu told reporters at a briefing.



Sandu

from Chisinau to an illegitimate one," Sandu said, "which would put our country at the disposal of Rus-

sia, in order to stop the European integration process."

She defiantly vowed: "The Kremlin's attempts to bring violence to our country will not succeed."

Since Russia invaded Ukraine nearly a year ago, Moldova, a former Soviet republic of about 2.6 million people, has sought to forge closer ties with its Western partners. Last June, it was granted European Union candidate status, the same day as Ukraine.

Sandu said that between October and December, Moldovan police and its Intelligence and Security Service have intervened in "several cases of organized criminal ele-

ments and stopped attempts at violence."

Over the past year, non-NATO Moldova has faced a string of problems. These include a severe energy crisis after Moscow dramatically reduced gas supplies; skyrocketing inflation; and several incidents in recent months involving missiles that have traversed its skies, and debris that has been found on its territory.

Moldovan authorities confirmed that another missile from the war in Ukraine had entered its airspace on Friday.

Sandu said that Russia wants to use Moldova in the war against Uk-

raine, without providing more details, and that information obtained by intelligence services contained what she described as instructions on rules of entry to Moldova for citizens from Russia, Belarus, Serbia and Montenegro.

"I assure you that the state institutions are working to prevent these challenges and keep the situation under control," Sandu said.

She said that Moldova's Parliament must adopt draft laws to equip its Intelligence and Security Service, and the prosecutor's office, "with the necessary tools to combat more effectively the risks to the country's security."

MIDEAST

Incirlik flights jump threefold for quake relief

BY ALISON BATH
AND JENNIFER SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military has facilitated nearly 2,000 air missions to deliver aid and personnel to Turkey in response to last week's devastating earthquake, a surge that has boosted Incirlik Air Base's daily air operations tempo by 340%, the Air Force said this week.

Those deliveries include nearly 6,000 tons of food, supplies and equipment, such as a 52-bed military field hospital tent, the Air Force's 39th Air Base Wing said in a statement Sunday. The wing is assigned to the base in south-central Turkey.

In addition, more than eight Army and Navy helicopters were on their way to Incirlik on Saturday to join four other helicopters already flying aid missions, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a statement the same day.

That U.S. response includes a Defense Department command and control center designed to meet the needs of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Navy said.

The center is commanded by Marine Brig. Gen. Andrew Priddy and under the operations of NAVEUR/6th Fleet.

Marines and sailors from Task Force 61/2, commanded by Priddy, were overseeing the arrival of two UH-60 Black Hawks, three HH-60 Pave Hawks and three CH-47 Chinooks to Incirlik on Sunday.

A few MH-60S and MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopters from the

"Our hearts are grieving with our Turkish allies."

1st Lt. Joseph Flemming
728th Air Mobility Squadron

USS George H.W. Bush, on patrol in the Mediterranean Sea, also were expected, the service said.

The aircraft would support transportation and logistics for the Disaster Assistance Response Team and two U.S. urban search and rescue teams, according to the Navy.

More than 35,000 people have died as a result of the 7.8 magnitude quake, which struck Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6, leveling buildings and leaving hundreds of thousands of people without shelter in freezing weather, The New York Times reported Monday.

In addition to cold and aftershocks, rescue operations have been hampered by other dangers. For example, an Israeli group announced Sunday that it was leaving Turkey because of significant security concerns, and German rescue operations were halted Saturday for the same reason, CNN reported Sunday.

An ongoing, nearly 12-year-long civil war in Syria has left a patchwork of areas in the north controlled by disparate groups.

Turkish-backed rebels have blocked aid convoys sent by rival U.S.-backed Kurdish groups, The Associated Press reported Sunday.



MIKE WRIGHT/U.S. Navy

Airmen of the 39th Air Base Wing at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, load supply trucks Sunday, during joint military assistance and disaster relief efforts, following the Feb. 6 earthquake in Turkey.



MADISONI SYLVESTER/U.S. Air Force

Members from the 39th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Incirlik assist humanitarian relief efforts by wrapping pallets containing a 52-bed emergency field hospital tent from U.S. charity Samaritan's Purse on Saturday.

U.S. airmen based at Incirlik, working with Turkish military forces, have unloaded 5,764 tons of food, supplies and equipment since relief efforts began last week, the Air Force said Sunday

in a statement.

The Turkish air base, about 8 miles east of Adana and 124 miles from the epicenter of the quake, is serving as a hub for humanitarian assistance flowing into the affect-

ed region. It was not significantly damaged in the earthquake.

The 728th Air Mobility Squadron at Incirlik has unloaded 210 aircraft since relief operations began Feb. 6, 1st Lt. Joseph Flemming, the squadron's flight commander of resource and readiness, said in the Sunday statement.

Meanwhile, the 39th Operational Support Squadron, also based at Incirlik, has supported 1,877 aircraft missions bringing international aid and personnel to Turkey.

Turkish air force personnel are working with U.S. forces to get cargo out to the affected areas as quickly as possible, Flemming said.

"It's been painful for us to see the news of the devastation around the country, and our hearts are grieving with our Turkish allies," he said.

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Turkish survivors face despair as rescues diminish

Associated Press

ADIYAMAN, Turkey — Thousands left homeless by a massive earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria a week ago packed into crowded tents or lined up in the streets for hot meals Monday, while the desperate search for anyone still alive likely entered its last hours.

One crew wrested a 4-year-old girl from rubble in hard-hit Adiyaman, 177 hours after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck.

Thousands of local and overseas teams, including Turkish coal miners and experts aided by sniffer dogs and thermal came-

ras, are scouring pulverized apartment blocks for signs of life.

While stories of near-miraculous rescues have flooded the airwaves in recent days — many broadcast live on Turkish television and beamed around the world — tens of thousands of dead have been found during the same period.

Experts say given temperatures that have fallen to 21 degrees Fahrenheit — and the total collapse of so many buildings — the window for such rescues is nearly shut.

The quake and its aftershocks, including a major one nine hours

after the initial temblor, struck southeastern Turkey and northern Syria on Feb. 6, killing more than 35,000 and reducing swaths of towns and cities inhabited by millions to fragments of concrete and twisted metal.

Damage included heritage sites in places like Antakya, an important ancient port and early center of Christianity historically known as Antioch.

Greek Orthodox churches in the region have started charity drives to assist the relief effort and raise funds to eventually rebuild or repair churches.

About 60 miles from the epicen-

ter, almost no houses were left standing in the village of Polat, where residents salvaged refrigerators, washing machines and other goods from wrecked homes.

Not enough tents have arrived for the homeless, said survivor Zehra Kurukafa, forcing families to share the tents that are available.

"We sleep in the mud, all together with two, three, even four families," said Kurukafa.

Turkish authorities said Monday that more than 150,000 survivors have been moved to shelters outside the affected provinces.

Volunteers from across Turkey

have mobilized to help millions of survivors, including a group of volunteer chefs and restaurant owners who served traditional food such as beans and rice and lentil soup for survivors who lined up in the streets of downtown Adiyaman.

As the scale of the disaster comes into view, sorrow and disbelief have turned to rage over the sense there has been an ineffective response to the historic disaster.

That anger could be a political problem for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who faces a tough reelection battle in May.

NATION



Nick Ut/AP

Pedestrians walk along a buckled sidewalk in Los Angeles.

Judge halts LA plan to destroy 13K trees for sidewalk repairs

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A plan to chop down as many as 13,000 trees while repairing Los Angeles sidewalks has been halted by a judge, who sided with advocates who say the city can make the fixes while preserving the shade and greenery.

Superior Court judge Mitchell Beckloff declared the environmental impact report for the city's proposed sidewalk repair program "fundamentally flawed," the Southern California News Group reported Saturday.

The judge's ruling last month came in a lawsuit filed by advocacy groups who accused the city of failing to consider alternative repair methods that would preserve mature trees.

"Other cities manage their sidewalk tree conflict easily and for whatever reason LA does not," Jeanne McConnell of the group Angelenos for Trees told the news group.

The city argued that its sidewalk repair program and associated tree removals was a justified effort to comply with a 2016 class ac-

tion settlement that requires LA to spend \$1.4 billion to improve its walkways for those with disabilities.

The judge ruled that the impact report failed to thoroughly examine the effects on wildlife and the environmental consequences of trading mature trees for young replacement trees.

The city may now appeal the court's decision, create a new environmental impact report to address the problems identified, or return to the drawing board with a new sidewalk repair plan.

States, cities scramble to combat animal 'tranq' used as street drugs

By Christine Vestal
Stateline.org

As a dangerous new additive found in fentanyl and other street drugs surges from coast to coast, health officials in nearly every state are scrambling to track it.

Xylazine, a large-animal tranquilizer not approved for human use, started showing up routinely in the drug supply in 2019, but didn't take off until the coronavirus pandemic began in 2020. Also known as tranq, xylazine can give users horrific skin lesions that can result in amputations. It also can cause hourslong blackouts, putting users at risk of theft, rape and exposure to extreme weather.

Now, local health officials in nearly every state are rushing to keep tabs on where xylazine is showing up and in what quantities. They are trying to alert drug users to steer clear of the toxic additive and educate health professionals and first responders about its devastating effects.

"They're using any data they can get their hands on to track xylazine and its complicated set of symptoms and effects on users," said Richa Ranade, senior director of overdose prevention at the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

In the past two years, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published three field reports tracking the spread of xylazine. But so far, there's no national plan for how to test for the drug and protect drug users. And because the tranquilizer has only been approved for cows, horses and other large animals, medical researchers know very little about its effects on humans and have not identified antidotes.

Lacking federal guidance, Boston, New York City, North Carolina and Rhode Island have developed innovative methods for rapidly testing illicit drug samples, followed by localized messaging to drug users and medical provid-

ers about the dangers of xylazine.

Philadelphia's health department has published a medical advisory outlining a protocol for xylazine withdrawal management. And Maryland has a pilot project for staffing local harm reduction centers with medical professionals who can treat the horrific wounds the drug is causing.

Epidemiologists at Brandeis University near Boston are working with state and local health officials and law enforcement to collect samples of the drug supply, test them as quickly as possible and immediately report back to the drug-using community on the prevalence of xylazine.

People who overdose after ingesting opioids combined with xylazine should be given naloxone to block the effects of the opioids. But their depressed breathing and heart function may continue because naloxone doesn't block xylazine, and there's no known medication that does.

Haley faces 'high-wire act' in election bid

By Meg Kinnard
and Steve Peoples
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Few have navigated the turbulent politics of the Trump era like Nikki Haley.

In early 2016, the then-South Carolina governor said she was "embarrassed" by candidate Donald Trump and decried his reluctance to condemn white supremacists. Nine months later, she agreed to join his Cabinet, serving as a key validator as Trump sought to win over skeptical world leaders and voters at home.

And shortly after Trump left the White House, Haley, whose resume by then included an ambassadorship to the United Nations, vowed not to step in the way if he ran for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. Yet on Wednesday, she is poised to become the first major Republican candidate to enter the race against him.

"It's going to be quite the high-wire act," said veteran Republican strategist Terry Sullivan. "She says she's always been an underdog. She will be again."

The 51-year-old Haley may be the first to take on Trump, but a half-dozen or more high-profile Republicans are expected to join the GOP's 2024 presidential nomination contest over the coming months. Some would-be competitors may be more popular than Haley even in South Carolina, where she lives and has established a campaign headquarters.

Likely rivals include Sen. Tim Scott, a fellow South Carolinian and perhaps the most celebrated elected official in a state where Trump has already locked up endorsements from the governor and its senior senator, Lindsey Graham.

Indeed, on the eve of this week's announcement, there is broad agreement that Haley — the only Republican woman of color expected in the 2024 contest, a politician who loves to remind people that she has never lost an election — is about to be tested as never before.

Trump has stepped up his attacks on Haley in recent weeks. But allies describe the former governor, who is the daughter of Indian immigrants, as a savvy executive uniquely positioned to lead a new generation of Republi-



John Locher/AP

Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley is expected to announce Wednesday her intention to seek the GOP's 2024 presidential nomination.

cans. They understand that the fight ahead could get ugly.

"She took the bull by the horns and said, 'That doesn't matter to me, I'm going to run,'" said longtime supporter Gavin J. Smith. "She did that when she ran for governor, and that's what you're going to see when she runs for president."

Perhaps more than anyone this young presidential primary season, Haley personifies the Republican Party's shifting views on Trump. Her reversal on whether to challenge the former president was based less on concerns about his divisive leadership or policy disagreements than the growing belief within the GOP that Trump is losing political strength.

Haley, like the majority of her party, largely supported Trump even after he inspired a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol.

It was not until Trump-backed candidates across several key states were defeated in last fall's midterm elections that a wave of high-profile Republicans began to openly weigh 2024 bids against him.

New York-based Republican donor Eric Levine says he's convinced that another Trump Republican nomination would lead to his party's destruction. Haley, he said, is among the three favorite Trump alternatives.

"I think as a woman of color and a daughter of legal immigrants from India, she'd give the Democratic Party no reason to exist. All their woke crap goes out the window," Levine said. "I think she's a spectacular candidate."

NATION

Union: Critical facts kept from EMTs on Nichols call

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The head of a union representing most of the Memphis Fire Department said three employees who were fired after the death of Tyre Nichols weren't given enough information as they responded to the call for medical help.

Thomas Malone, president of the Memphis Fire Fighters Association, also wrote in a letter to city councilmembers that information was withheld from those first responders by people on the scene.

Nichols, who is Black, was beaten by Memphis police after he was pulled over Jan. 7 for an alleged traffic violation. However, Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis has said publicly released footage failed to show why Nichols was stopped at all.

The union leader came to the defense of the fire department as a whole, saying its more-than-1,600 employees "serve this city and its citizens with purpose and intent each and every day."

The Daily Memphian reported on and published a copy of the letter, which says "there is no way any member could be truly prepared for a situation that occurred on January 7, 2023."

"Our members were not given

adequate information upon dispatch or upon arrival of the scene," Malone wrote. "Quite frankly, there was information withheld by those already on the scene which caused our members to handle things differently than they should have."

Three fire department employees were fired after Nichols died. In all, 13 police officers have either been disciplined or are under investigation for their roles in Nichols' death. Six were fired, and five of them are charged with murder. Two Shelby County sheriff's deputies were suspended.

Two of the former fire department employees, EMT Robert Long and advanced EMT JaMichael Sandridge, had their professional licenses suspended by a state medical board. Lt. Michelle Whitaker was the third employee let go.

Her license was not considered for suspension, though state Emergency Medical Services board members commented that more actions could follow.

Memphis city spokeswoman Arlenia Cole told the Daily Memphian that all three former fire department employees have appealed their firings.

Fire Chief Gina Sweat has said

the department received a call from police after someone was pepper-sprayed. When the workers arrived at 8:41 p.m., Nichols was handcuffed on the ground and slumped against a squad car, the statement said.

Long and Sandridge, based on the nature of the call and information they were told by police, "failed to conduct an adequate patient assessment of Mr. Nichols," the statement said. Whitaker remained in the vehicle with the driver during the response to Nichols' beating, the department said.

An ambulance was called, and it arrived at 8:55 p.m., the statement said. An emergency unit cared for Nichols and left for a hospital with him at 9:08 p.m., which was 27 minutes after Long, Sandridge and Whitaker arrived, officials said. Nichols died three days later.

An investigation determined that all three violated multiple policies and protocols, the statement said.

"They were reacting to what they saw, what they were told at the scene," Sweat recently told city council members. "Obviously, they did not perform at the level that we expect, or that the citizens of Memphis deserve."



GREGORY BULL/AP

A woman from Cuba waits with other migrants to be processed to seek asylum after crossing the border into the United States on Jan. 6, near Yuma, Ariz.

Migrants seeking US sponsors wary of online scams

Associated Press

Pedro Yudel Bruzon was looking for someone in the U.S. to support his effort to seek asylum when he landed on a Facebook page filled with posts demanding up to \$10,000 for a financial sponsor.

It's part of an underground market that's emerged since the Biden administration announced it would accept 30,000 immigrants each month arriving by air from Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Haiti. Applicants for the humanitarian parole program need someone in the U.S., often a friend or relative, to promise to provide financial support for at least two years.

Bruzon, who lives in Cuba, doesn't know anyone who can do that, so he searched online. But he also doesn't have the money to pay for a sponsor and isn't sure the offers — or those making them — are real.

He worries about being exploited or falling prey to a scam.

"They call it humanitarian parole, but it has nothing to do with being humanitarian," said Bruzon, who said he struggles to feed himself and his mother with what he makes as a 33-year-old Havana security guard. "Everyone wants money, even people in the same family."

It's unclear how many people in the United States may have charged migrants to sponsor them, but Facebook groups with names like "Sponsors U.S." carry dozens of posts offering and seeking financial supporters.

Several immigration attorneys said they could find no specific law prohibiting people from charging money to sponsor beneficiaries.

"As long as everything is accurate on the form and there are no fraudulent statements it may be legal," said lawyer Taylor Levy,

who long worked along the border around El Paso, Texas. "But what worries me are the risks in terms of being trafficked and exploited. If lying is involved, it could be fraud."

Also, she noted, it "seems counterintuitive" to pay someone to promise to provide financial support.

Attorney Leon Fresco, a former top aide to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, said charging to be a sponsor is a "gray area" and the U.S. should send a forceful message against the practice.

Kennji Kizuka, an attorney and director of asylum policy for the International Rescue Committee, which resettles newcomers in the United States, said this type of thing happens with every new U.S. program benefiting migrants.

"It looks like some are just going to take people's money and the people are going to get nothing in return," Kizuka said.

Levy said such exploitation surrounding a similar U.S. program for Ukrainians prompted the government to publish an online guide about how to spot and protect against human-trafficking schemes.

One common scheme with immigration programs is known as notario fraud and involves people who call themselves "notarios públicos" charging large sums. In Latin America, the term refers to attorneys with special credentials, leading lead migrants to believe they are lawyers who can provide legal advice. In the U.S., notaries public are merely empowered to witness the signing of legal documents and issue oaths.

In another scheme, someone poses as a U.S. official asking for money. The U.S. government notes: "We do not accept Western Union, MoneyGram, PayPal, or gift cards as payment for immigration fees."

Jury mulls death for NYC bike path killer

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A jury on Monday will begin considering whether an Islamic extremist who killed eight people on a New York City bike path should get a death sentence, an extraordinarily rare penalty in a state that hasn't had an execution in 60 years.

Sayfullo Saipov, 35, was convicted last month in the 2017 attack, in which he intentionally drove a truck at high speed down a path along the Hudson River, mowing down bicyclists on a sunny morning hours before the city's Halloween celebrations.

The same jury that found Saipov guilty will return to work, hearing

from additional witnesses in the trial's penalty phase. Anything less than a unanimous vote for death will mean Saipov will spend the rest of his life in prison.

Saipov's lawyers hope to convince jurors that a life term is punishment enough for a spree that killed five friends from Argentina, a woman from Belgium and two Americans.

New York does not have capital punishment and hasn't executed anyone since 1963, but Saipov's

trial is in federal court, where a death sentence is still an option, though one rarely sought with success. The last time a person was executed for a federal crime in New York was in 1954.

President Joe Biden put a moratorium on federal executions after taking office and his Justice Department has not, until now, initiated any new death penalty proceedings.

Saipov's lawyers have argued it is unconstitutional for prosecutors to seek his execution when the government has stopped seeking death in so many other cases, including some with defendants who killed more people.



Saipov

U-Haul hits, injures 8 pedestrians in NYC

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A man driving a U-Haul truck struck and injured several people in New York City on Monday before police were able to pin the careening vehicle against a building following a milelong pursuit through Brooklyn.

At least eight people were hurt

at two locations, including two people who were in critical condition, the fire department said.

The truck sped through the Bay Ridge neighborhood of Brooklyn, hitting people on a sidewalk at one point, before police stopped it more than 3 miles away near the entrance to a tunnel leading from Brooklyn to Manhattan.

A pastry shop owner, Pat Giura, said he didn't see the truck but saw the aftermath: a woman on the ground with her scooter or e-bike destroyed and another person hurt blocks away.

Aerial video from news helicopters showed the truck on a sidewalk, its path blocked by a police cruiser.

NATION

Spirits overtake brews amid rise in cocktail favor

By BRUCE SCHREINER AND JIM SALTER
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Producers of spirits have new bragging rights in the age-old whiskey vs. beer barroom debate.

New figures show that spirits surpassed beer for U.S. market-share supremacy, based on supplier revenues, a spirit industry group announced Thursday.

The rise to the top for spirit-makers was fueled in part by the resurgent cocktail culture — including the growing popularity of ready-to-drink concoctions — as well as strong growth in the tequila and American whiskey segments, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States said.

In 2022, spirits gained market share for the 13th straight year in the fiercely competitive U.S. beverage alcohol market, as its supplier sales reached 42.1%, the council said.

After years of steady growth, it marked the first time that spirit supplier revenues have surpassed beer — but just barely, the spirit industry group said. Beer holds a 41.9% market share, it said.

“Despite the tough economy, consumers continued to enjoy premium spirits and fine cocktails

in 2022,” Distilled Spirits Council President and CEO Chris Swonger said.

Overall spirit supplier sales in the U.S. were up 5.1% in 2022 to a record \$37.6 billion, the group said. Volumes rose 4.8% to 305 million 9-liter cases.

Seemingly unfazed, Brian Crawford, president and CEO of the Beer Institute, insisted that beer “remains America’s number one choice in beverage alcohol.”

“It’s interesting to hear liquor companies boast about making money hand-over-fist while simultaneously going state-to-state hunting for more tax carveouts from state legislatures,” Crawford said in a statement.

Benj Steinman, president of Beer Marketer’s Insights, a leading beer industry trade publication, said the beer industry saw unprecedented growth in the 1970s, growing at a pace of 4% annually. As recently as 2000, beer’s share in the alcohol market was 58%.

Over the past several decades, beer’s growth has essentially been flat. Meanwhile, spirits have flourished, especially over the past two decades.

“I think there’s just a long arc on these things,” Steinman said.



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Eli Breitburg-Smith, head distiller and co-owner of Baltimore Spirits Company, checks the quality of rye whiskey from a barrel, Feb. 8, in Baltimore.

Steinman and Bart Watson, chief economist at the Brewers Association, a craft beer industry trade group, agreed there are several reasons for the shift to spirits.

“Some of it’s just the younger generation coming up, looking for a lot of variety,” Steinman said. “They sometimes like spirits. Cocktail culture is another thing.”

Watson cited data showing that liquor has become 20% cheaper relative to beer in recent decades.

“Price is a particularly large part of the story,” he said.

Another factor is advertising and marketing. Watson pointed to the success of spirits in its outreach to women. Steinman said distilled spirits now advertise freely, something they didn’t do generations ago.

“They’ve increased their availability. They’ve increased their ability to advertise. They’ve had a lot of legislative and policy wins that have enabled growth for distilled spirits,” Steinman said.

For spirit producers, reaching the market share milestone was worth toasting.

At Baltimore Spirits Company in Maryland, the head distiller and the manager of its cocktail bar said they are pleased with the rise in the consumption of spirits.

Eli Breitburg-Smith, head distiller and cofounder, said the distillery founders saw a space in the market to make rye whiskey as consumer demand was growing.

“We did see that it was going to be on the rise,” he said. “Now, I don’t know that we thought it

would be overtaking beer or anything like that, but we felt like there was a good space in the market for new whiskey, original whiskey, and people that ... were making a unique product.”

More than 60% of the spirit sector’s total U.S. revenue last year came from sales of high-end and super-premium spirits, mostly led by tequila and American whiskey, said Christine LoCascio, the group’s chief of public policy and strategy. Those high-end products fetch the highest prices.

“While many consumers are feeling the pinch from inflation and reduced disposable income, they are still willing to purchase that special bottle of spirits choosing to sip a little luxury and drink better, not more,” LoCascio said.

Researchers find new way to track invasive pythons in Fla.

By BILL KEARNEY
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Wildlife researchers studying mammals in Key Largo have discovered a potentially groundbreaking — if not heartbreaking — way to locate and kill invasive Burmese pythons, especially the big ones.

A team observing raccoon and possum behavior along urban and wilderness fringe of Crocodile National Wildlife Refuge fitted dozens of the mammals with GPS collars, and tracked their locations for months.

In September, about five months into the study, one of the possum collars sent out a mortality signal, triggered by lack of movement — maybe it was hit by a car, maybe a local dog killed it. But then, a few hours later, the collar started moving again.

The researchers had a hunch that the possum suffered a brutal fate.

“That’s the signature signal that they got eaten by a snake,” said Michael Cove, curator of mammals at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, one of the partners on the study. He and his research partners from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Southern Illinois University suspected the snake sat around and digested the possum,



MIAMI HERALD / TNS

Burmese pythons are believed to have arrived in South Florida as pets in the 1980s and then were released by frustrated owners who got tired of feeding them mice and other live meals.

and then started moving again.

But even with the tracker, it would take them time to confirm their hunch — Key Largo is essentially a giant fossilized coral reef with a labyrinth of underground pockets and caves. “This thing was underground. It took a month of tracking the snake underground (to capture it).”

When they finally yanked it out of the ground, they discovered a 12-foot-long, 66-

pound female full of egg follicles. Large females like this can lay close to 100 eggs, and are the holy grail for python hunters. Removing them from the ecosystem is like removing dozens, if not hundreds, of future snakes. The team euthanized her, opened her up and retrieved the collar, which they hope to fit onto another possum soon.

Though the possum’s demise was grim — pythons coil around their prey, tightening the grip every time the animal exhales, eventually suffocating it — the death proved that wildlife officials can find big pythons by tracking their prey.

Cove and his research partners hope the method can help control the explosive population growth of the invasive snake, which has decimated ecosystems in South Florida for decades. Indigenous to southeast Asia, Burmese pythons likely slithered their way into the Everglades in the 1990s via the exotic pet trade.

They’ve thrived, establishing breeding populations as far south as Key Largo and as far north at the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in western Palm Beach County.

Cove said that the problem is so severe in Everglades National Park that “there are no more mammals to put these collars on.” The

largest invasive python ever recorded in Florida was 18 feet long.

The study occurred on the boundary between the human world and wilderness, and looked at what happens when raccoons and possums are “dumpster diving and eating all the cat food that people put out for them instead of eating the native seeds and fruits,” Cove said.

Both species consume a lot of native fruits and defecate the seeds out in different areas, becoming important seed dispersers.

A parallel goal, though, was to learn more about pythons if the mammals were eaten.

“If we could catch a snake in the act, it could lead to management and removal of the pythons,” Cove said.

The research collaborators at Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge are currently putting together proposals with stakeholders in South Florida to find ways to fund and create more and cheaper collars for further study.

Cove said researchers are working on building collars that are small and light enough to not impede the raccoons and possums who wear them, but large enough to prevent the big target snakes from passing them.

WORLD

World Cup skiers call for action on climate

Associated Press

COURCHEVEL, France — Overall World Cup winners Mikaela Shiffrin, Federica Brignone and Aleksander Aamodt Kilde are among nearly 200 athletes from multiple disciplines who have signed a letter addressed to the International Ski and Snowboard Federation demanding action over climate change.

The letter was delivered during the skiing world championships after warm weather and a lack of snow wiped out nearly a month of racing at the start of this season, with preseason training on melting European glaciers heading toward extinction and the impact of climate change on the schedule being seen even in January.

"It's about time to address a really important topic," Kilde said after earning a silver medal in



MATTHIAS SCHRADER/AP

People ski on a strip of snow near Schladming, Austria, on Jan. 6.

downhill on Sunday. "We see that the world is changing. We see also the impact of our sport. ... I want the future generations to experience winter and to be able to do what I do."

The letter was written by Austrian downhiller Julian Schütter, an ambassador for the nonprofit organization Protect Our Winters, known as POW.

"We are already experiencing the effects of climate change in our everyday lives and our profession," the athletes said in the letter. "The public opinion about skiing is shifting towards unjustifiability. ... We need progressive organizational action. We are aware

of the current sustainability efforts of FIS and rate them as insufficient."

Olympic cross-country skiing champion Jessie Diggins and Freeride World Tour champions Arianna Tricomi and Xavier de la Rue were also among the letter's signees.

"This is our most important race, let's win it together," the athletes said.

In terms of Alpine skiing, the athletes asked the federation, known as FIS, to shift the start of the season from late October to late November and the end of the season from mid-March to late April.

Portugal church sex abuse study finds thousands of likely victims

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal — More than 4,800 individuals may have been victims of child sex abuse in the Portuguese Catholic Church and 512 alleged victims have already come forward to speak out, an expert panel looking into historic abuse in the church said Monday.

Senior Portuguese church officials had previously claimed that only a handful of cases had occurred.

Senior clergymen sat in the front row of the auditorium where panel members read out some of the harrowing accounts of alleged abuse included in their final report. There were vivid and shocking descriptions. The head of the Portuguese Bishops Conference, Bishop José Ornelas, said church authorities would study the panel's 500-page report before giving an official response.

"We have seen and heard things we cannot ignore," he told reporters. "It's a dramatic set of circumstances. It won't be easy to get over it."

The Independent Committee for the Study of Child Abuse in the Catholic Church, set up by Portuguese bishops just over a year ago, looked into alleged cases from 1950 onward. The panel produced

its final report Monday. Portuguese bishops are due to discuss the report next month.

The statute of limitations has expired on most of the alleged cases. Only 25 allegations were passed to prosecutors, the panel said.

The report, criticized by some as long overdue, came four years after Pope Francis gathered church leaders from around the world at the Vatican to address the sex abuse crisis in the church.

That meeting was held more than 30 years after the scandal first erupted in Ireland and Australia and 20 years after it hit the United States.

Bishops and other Catholic superiors in many parts of Europe at the time continued to deny that clergy sex abuse existed or insisted on giving little weight to the problem.

Pedro Strecht, a psychiatrist who headed the panel in Portugal, said it estimates the true number of victims during the period as being at least at 4,815. He didn't explain how the extrapolation was made. The panel is not publishing the names of the victims, the identities of the alleged abusers, or the places the abuses allegedly happened.



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WORLD

Thousands march in Israel as Netanyahu allies push overhaul

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Tens of thousands of Israelis — hoisting flags, blowing on horns and chanting “democracy” and “no to dictatorship”— protested outside the parliament building on Monday as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government formally launched a contentious plan to overhaul the country’s legal system.

It was the largest protest outside the Knesset in years and reflected the deep divisions over the plan. The proposed changes have triggered weeks of mass demonstrations, drawn cries of protests from influential business leaders and former military men and even prompted a statement of concern from President Joe Biden.

Despite a plea from the nation’s

figurehead president to put the legislation on hold, Netanyahu’s allies approved a series of legislative changes during a stormy committee meeting Monday. The vote now sends the legislation to the full parliament for a series of votes — an opening salvo in a battle expected to stretch on for weeks.

“They hear our cry. They hear the strong voice of truth,” opposition leader Yair Lapid said from the stage outside parliament. “They hear it and they’re afraid.”

Netanyahu and his supporters say the proposed changes are needed to rein in a judiciary that wields too much power. But his critics say the judicial overhaul is tantamount to a coup and will destroy Israeli democracy. They also say that Netanyahu, who is on trial for a series of corruption



OHAD ZWIGENBERG/AP

Israelis protest against plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s new government to overhaul the judicial system, outside the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, in Jerusalem, on Monday.

charges, has a conflict of interest.

The protesters came from across the country. Organizers said that upwards of 100,000 people were in attendance. Packed trainloads of people arrived in Jerusalem, streaming up escalators in the city’s main train station chanting, “democracy,” cheering and whistling, and waving the national flag.

A few hundred others gathered in protest at Jerusalem’s Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews

can pray, before marching toward the Knesset.

In parliament, opposition lawmakers vocally protested the proposed reform to judge appointments ahead of a committee vote that would send the bill to the full parliament for a vote. During an unruly session, members of the opposition stood on the conference table and shouted as a key Netanyahu ally tried to hold the vote. The motions passed in a 9-7 committee vote.

Israeli army kills man in West Bank raid

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A Palestinian man was killed and at least seven others were wounded Monday during a shootout with Israeli troops in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian officials said.

It was the latest death in a surge of Israeli-Palestinian violence that shows no signs of slowing.

The Israeli military said it carried out raids across the West Bank overnight, and that troops came under fire during the arrest of two men suspected of killing an Israeli soldier in October. The army said the two wanted men were injured in the shootout and arrested. The Palestinian Health Ministry said Amir Bustami, 21, was killed in the Israeli army raid. It was not clear if he had been involved in the shootout.

Tensions have mounted for months as Israel has conducted nightly arrest raids in the West Bank, which were prompted by a spate of Palestinian attacks on Israelis last spring.

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market




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944

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

1908 Harley-Davidson is now priciest bike ever

WI MILWAUKEE — A rare Harley-Davidson motorcycle built in 1908 has become the most expensive motorcycle ever sold at auction, according to data compiled by a website that tracks vintage motorcycle sales.

The Strap Tank Harley-Davidson was recorded on vintagent.com as being sold for \$935,000 after auction fees last month at the Mecum Auction in Las Vegas, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported Friday.

The bike was named Strap Tank because its oil and fuel tanks are attached to the frame with nickel straps. The bike is believed to be one of only 12 such models in the world.

The record-breaking bike had many of its original parts, making it even more rare, said Greg Arnold, Motorcycle Division Manager at Mecum Auctions.

Students protest urinal ban in gender debate

NH MILFORD — Dozens of students walked out of their New Hampshire school after the district banned urinals in a compromise to a proposal that would have blocked children from using facilities based on their gender identity.

The school board decided a few days before the Friday walkout to prohibit students at Milford Middle School and Milford High School from using urinals or shared spaces in locker rooms.

The ban in a town of about 15,000 people roughly 35 miles from Concord, New Hampshire's capital, was the culmination of a long debate about district rules about bathroom use and gender identity. District procedures say students can access the bathroom that "corresponds to their gender identity consistently asserted at school."

That procedure still applies. But a proposal that came before the school board called for no longer allowing students to use school bathrooms and locker rooms based on their gender identity. Board member Noah Boudreault said he proposed the restrictions on urinals as a compromise.

LA plane being towed collides with shuttle bus

CA LOS ANGELES — An airline jet being towed on a taxiway collided with a shuttle bus at Los Angeles International Airport late Friday, injuring five people.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Saturday that it is investigating the incident involving an American Airlines Airbus A321 jet. There were no passengers on board.

The airport said on Twitter that the jet was being towed from a



RUSS DILLINGHAM, SUN JOURNAL/AP

Pup power

Jack Moreau gets pulled on the snow by his dog Shelby during the Poland Community Winter Festival in Poland, Maine, on Saturday.

gate to a parking area when it "made contact" with a shuttle bus that was transporting passengers between terminals.

The Los Angeles Fire Department said four people were taken to hospitals after the "low-speed collision," which occurred around 10 p.m. The driver of the tug pulling the plane was in moderate condition and the driver and two passengers on the bus were in fair condition, the department said. The only person on the plane, a worker, was treated but declined to be taken to a hospital, according to the fire department.

There was no interruption to airport operations, the airport said.

1st infant surrendered anonymously at 'baby box'

KY BOWLING GREEN — Kentucky has seen its first infant anonymously dropped off at one of its "baby box" safe surrender locations.

At a news conference Friday, Safe Haven Baby Boxes founder and CEO Monica Kelsey said the child was dropped off within the last seven days at a Bowling Green Fire Department location, declining to be more specific to protect anonymity. She said fire department staff was able to tend to the child in less than 90 seconds.

The child is the 24th in the country to be surrendered at one of more than 130 baby boxes and drawers the organization has established across nine states.

Gov. Andy Beshear signed a law in 2021 that allows the use of baby boxes for children less than 30 days old. The law requires the

boxes to be located at police stations, fire stations or hospitals that are staffed 24 hours a day. It also requires equipping them with a notification system to alert the first responders on site that a child has been placed inside the box.

Emu escapes, causes ruckus before capture

MA EAST BRIDGEWATER — A large pet bird that is normally native to Australia caused a ruckus south of Boston after escaping from her home.

The bird is an emu, which is the second-tallest bird on Earth after its close relative the ostrich. The flightless bird got loose on Thursday night in East Bridgewater and led police on a chase through Brockton, WCVB-TV reported.

The bird's owner, Lee Flaherty, told the television station that a wild animal likely caused the emu to jump over a 6-foot high fence and take off. The bird, named Mallory, was eventually subdued in a parking lot by Flaherty, police and a bystander.

Mallory was back in her pen after the journey, in which she traveled past Massasoit Community College and Brockton Hospital.

13-year-old boy arrested for threats at school

AZ COTTONWOOD — A 13-year-old Cottonwood boy is facing serious charges after he allegedly threatened classmates, saying they were on a "kill list."

Cottonwood police said the incident was reported Thursday after-

noon at Mountain View Preparatory School. Several students informed teachers that the boy repeatedly made threats. Officers spoke with the students and teachers involved.

Authorities said the boy then said he had no real intention to injure anyone. They also found no evidence of an actual list.

The teen, whose name is not being released, was being held Friday at Yavapai County Juvenile Detention Center on charges of making a terroristic threat, threatening or intimidating and interference or disruption of an educational institution.

Factory workers subdue armed person at plant

MN NEW YORK MILLS — A man who fired a shot at a co-worker during a dispute at a Minnesota boat factory Thursday was subdued by other workers as he tried to flee, preventing any serious injuries, authorities said.

Officers responding to a call about an active shooter found David Jeremiah Gadsen, 21, being held by his co-workers at the Lund Boat Co. in New York Mills, Minn., Otter Tail County Sheriff Barry Fitzgibbons said.

Fitzgibbons said in a news release that the two men were arguing inside the plant when Gadsen pulled a handgun and fired one shot, which did not strike the 31-year-old intended victim.

One other shot was "possibly" fired as the shooter chased the other man out of the factory, Fitzgibbons said. The victim escaped unharmed.

Gadsen tried to get back inside the factory but a worker held the door shut and prevented him from entering, according to the sheriff. When Gadsen tried to run away, other workers caught him and held him for officers, Fitzgibbons said.

Oldest school for Black children going to museum

VA WILLIAMSBURG — A building believed to be the oldest surviving schoolhouse for Black children in the United States was hoisted onto a flatbed truck and moved a half-mile Friday into Colonial Williamsburg, a Virginia museum that continues to expand its emphasis on African American history.

Built 25 years before the American Revolution, the original structure stood near the college campus of William & Mary. The two-story pinewood building held as many as 30 students at a time, some of them free Black children studying alongside the enslaved.

Hundreds of people lined the streets to celebrate its slow-speed trip into the heart of the living history museum, which tells the story of Virginia's colonial capital through interpreters and restored buildings.

For historians and descendants alike, the Bray School contradicts the belief that all enslaved Americans were uneducated. But the school's faith-based curriculum — created by an English charity — also justified slavery and encouraged students to accept their fate as God's plan.

FACES

‘Magic Mike’s Last Dance’ wins Super Bowl weekend box office

From wire reports

The third installment in the “Magic Mike” series danced its way to the top of the box office charts this weekend with a James Cameron doubleheader, “Avatar: The Way of Water” and “Titanic” (yes that “Titanic”), looming close behind.

“Magic Mike’s Last Dance” earned \$8.2 million in its first weekend in North American theaters, according to studio estimates on Sunday. Cameron’s “Avatar” sequel brought in an additional \$6.9 million while the 25th anniversary rerelease of “Titanic” took in \$6.4 million from Friday to Sunday.

North American moviegoing tends to come to a halt on Super Bowl Sunday and studios react strategically, often releasing films that are more “female-targeted.”

“Magic Mike’s Last Dance,” which brought Steven Soderbergh back to the director’s chair, was given a modest theatrical release in only 1,500 theaters. The film starring Tatum as the lovable male stripper and introducing a wealthy benefactor played by Salma Hayek, was made to go straight to HBO Max. But like the “House Party” reboot from several weeks ago, Warner Bros. pivoted and decided to go theatrical first with both in a company effort to refocus on the theatrical experience and give fresh fare to exhibitors.

The “Magic Mike” franchise has been a profitable one. In 2012, the first film opened to some \$39.1 million from just under 4,000 theaters, on its way to earning \$167.3 million globally (against a \$7 million production budget). The second, “XXL,” was made for slightly more (\$14 million) and took in slightly less (\$122.5 million) in 2015. The success of the films also spawned a Las Vegas stage show that has since expanded to Miami and London.

This latest installment reportedly carried a much bigger production budget, around \$40 million.

“Avatar: The Way of Water” in its ninth weekend added \$25.8 million globally, bringing its total earnings to \$2.2 billion, holding its spot as the 4th biggest movie release ever but closing in on “Titanic.”

Globally, “Titanic” earned \$22.3 million globally, with \$2 million of that from IMAX screens. “Titanic” has now earned an estimated \$2.2 billion globally, maintaining its title as the third biggest movie of all time.

In fourth place was the Super Bowl-themed “80 for Brady,” in its second weekend, with \$6 million. The film has made just under \$25 million so far. M. Night Shyamalan’s “Knock at the Cabin” rounded out the top five with \$5.5 million.

U2 plans concerts in Las Vegas

U2 is returning to the concert stage this year for the first time since 2019 but without one of the original quartet, as drummer Larry Mullen Jr. is injured.

The band offered a hint about its reemergence on the biggest stage possible — in a commercial that aired during the Super Bowl on Sunday — and announced it would play a series of shows this fall to open the new MSG Sphere venue in Las Vegas.

The concerts will be focused on the band’s 1991 album, “Achtung Baby.”

“We need to get back on stage and see the faces of our fans again,” band members Bono, the Edge and Adam Clayton said in a statement Sunday.

No other dates were announced beyond Las Vegas, although it’s unlikely a show will be built for just one city. In 2017 and 2019, the band did a worldwide concert tour based on its “Joshua Tree” album.

U2 wouldn’t detail Mullen’s health concerns, but The Washington Post reported in November that the drummer had issues with his neck and elbows that needed surgery. Mullen will be replaced in Las Vegas by Dutch drummer Bram van den Berg.

Next month U2 is planning to release the disc “Songs of Surrender,” featuring re-recorded and re-imagined versions of 40 songs from its catalog.

Other news

■ **David Jude Jolicoeur**, known widely as Trugoy the Dove and one of the founding members of the Long Island hip-hop trio De La Soul, has died. He was 54. His representative Tony Ferguson confirmed the reports Sunday. In recent years, Jolicoeur had said he was battling congestive heart failure.

■ Actor and musician **Cody Longo**, known for his role in the soap opera “Days of Our Lives,” was found dead Feb. 10 at his home in Austin, Texas, a representative confirmed to The Los Angeles Times. He was 34. The cause of death has not been reported.



JEFF LEWIS/AP

Rihanna performs during Sunday’s NFL Super Bowl halftime show in Glendale, Ariz.

Rihanna reveals a super surprise

Singer sports baby bump during football halftime show

The Washington Post

Following her much-anticipated Super Bowl performance on Sunday, a representative for Rihanna confirmed the singer is pregnant with her second child, the Associated Press reported.

Sporting a red jumpsuit, open to reveal a tighter red layer of clothing — and a conspicuous bump — Rihanna performed 13 minutes of her greatest hits surrounded by dozens of dancers in puffy white costumes. At times, she appeared to stroke her midsection, sparking speculation on social media about a possible pregnancy.

It was her first public performance since the 2018 Grammy Awards and her first since becoming a mother; she had a son

nine months ago with rapper A\$AP Rocky.

The singer said in 2019 that she had turned down the chance to perform in the Super Bowl halftime show in support of Colin Kaepernick, who received a heavy backlash when he was the first NFL player to take a knee during the playing of the national anthem.

This time around, Rihanna, 34, credited her son for her decision to perform. “When you become a mom, there’s something that just happens where you feel like you can take on the world, you can do anything,” Rihanna said ahead of the Super Bowl.

She added: “It’s important for me to do this this year. It’s important for representation, it’s important for my son to see that.”

Harry Styles, Beyoncé and Wet Leg win at UK’s Brit Awards

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

It was Harry’s night at the Brit Awards. Harry Styles won four prizes, including album of the year, at the U.K.’s leading music awards Feb. 11, while female-led indie rock band Wet Leg took trophies for group of the year and best new artist.

Beyoncé added two Brits to her crowded shelf of awards — international artist of the year and international song of the year, for “Break My Soul.”

Styles took the album of the year trophy for “Harry’s House,” less than a week after winning the same category at the Grammy Awards. He also won for pop/R&B act, song of the year for “As It Was,” and artist of the year.

Accepting the best-artist trophy, the global pop heartthrob thanked “my mum for signing me up for ‘X Factor,’” the talent show that

brought him to fame with boy band One Direction.

Styles gave shoutouts to Charli XCX, Rina Sawayama, Mabel, Florence + The Machine and Becky Hill — performers who failed to make the Brits’ all-male artist of the year shortlist.

Two years ago the Brits replaced separate male and female performer categories with gender-neutral awards in a bid to become more inclusive. But the change drew some criticism this year when the Brits announced a best-artist shortlist with no female acts.

The move to gender-neutral prizes was among changes made in response to longstanding criticism that the Brits failed to reflect the diversity of British music. In 2017, the academy of more than 1,000 music industry professionals that chooses Brits winners was expanded in an attempt to make it more gender-bal-

anced and diverse.

Founded in 1977, the Brits have evolved from a rough-around-the-edges industry event to a slick showcase for U.K. talent that has boosted the careers of future megastars including Adele.

This year’s breakthrough acts include Wet Leg, the punky band formed by Rhian Teasdale and Hester Chambers on England’s rural Isle of Wight.

The Brits include four awards for different genres that are chosen by public vote. As well as Styles’ pop/R&B trophy, the prize for alternative/rock went to the 1975, Manchester rapper Aitch won the grime/hip hop category and Becky Hill was named best dance act for the second year running.

Ireland’s Fontaines DC was named international group of the year and David Guetta was declared producer of the year.



VIANNEY LE CAER, INVISION/AP

Harry Styles accepts the trophy for Best Pop/R&B Act at the Brit Awards on Saturday in London.

STARS AND STRIPES.

OPINION

Tough-on-China looms as a 2024 GOP theme

BY JIM GERAGHTY

Special to The Washington Post

Judging from China's saber-rattling about Taiwan and combativeness toward the United States, including sending the occasional spy balloon floating overhead, the Chinese government under President Xi Jinping is not going to suddenly start playing nice before the 2024 election. As a result, Republican candidates for the 2024 presidential nod, and the eventual nominee, are likely to spend a lot of time claiming to be the toughest on China.

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who's contemplating a presidential run, has a book out called "Never Give an Inch," an account of his years in the Donald Trump administration that could double as a calling card for Republican voters. Three-quarters of the way through, he offers a particularly unflattering portrait of Trump — his potential rival for the 2024 nomination — and a glimpse of the author's attitude toward China.

Pompeo writes that a speech he gave in 2020 — accusing the Chinese Communist Party of repeatedly delaying sharing critical information about the coronavirus and trying to obscure China's role in a global disaster — infuriated Xi, who picked up the phone and gave Trump an earful.

Trump in turn gave Pompeo an earful, the author says, telling him that angering Xi endangered supplies of personal protective equipment from China and "our trade deal," adding, "Stop, for God's sake!"

Pompeo notes that if you review his public remarks in the following weeks, he dutifully followed Trump's command. But, he adds, "I was not happy that the president had tweeted that the CCP was doing a good job on the virus" and had heaped praise on Xi. Pompeo writes that he understood the circumstances — particularly U.S. reliance on Chinese PPE

exports — but you can almost see him fuming: "Accountability matters too much — and let's never forget that Xi threatened American lives by withholding potentially life-saving materials simply because I spoke the truth."

If Pompeo runs, he'll have the standing to argue that Trump wasn't tough enough on China, pointing to anecdotes such as that one — and he likely won't be alone in the argument. Another person who served in the Trump administration and is thinking about a presidential campaign, former national security adviser John Bolton, contended in a Wall Street Journal excerpt of his own White House memoir that Trump "pleaded with Chinese leader Xi Jinping for domestic political help" and "subordinated national-security issues to his own reelection prospects."

What about former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, who plans to officially announce her 2024 candidacy on Wednesday? She can point to her (sometimes unsuccessful) work to oppose China's global influence while serving as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in the Trump administration.

If Trump gets up on some presidential debate stage and claims that no one was tougher on China than he was, Democrats would have to take a number and get in line behind Pompeo, Bolton and Haley in their rebuttals.

Also note that while you might not think that the governor of Florida has much of a role in U.S. foreign policy, Ron DeSantis — another likely 2024 candidate — can point to state-level initiatives prohibiting land purchases by Chinese entities, barring state contracts with Chinese technology firms, and stopping Florida colleges and universities from accepting gifts from foreign entities.

Just about anyone with GOP leadership aspirations will want to be able to point to a long-standing wariness of China.

If President Joe Biden is the Democratic nominee next year, he will be judged on his own record with China, and he'll have successes to point to, most notably his robust effort to deny China access to powerful advanced semiconductors and the tools to manufacture them.

But there's no denying Biden was something of a Johnny-come-lately to the tough-on-China position, with his 2019 assertions such as "They're not bad folks, folks. But guess what? They're not competition for us," and "No other nation can catch us, including China. I got criticized for saying that." And his performance during the Chinese spy balloon episode has provided grist for Republican critics. Last week, before Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken finally acted, Haley tweeted: "Shoot down the balloon. Cancel Blinken's trip. Hold China accountable. Biden is letting China walk all over us. It's time to make America strong again."

According to Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman in late December, Biden intended in the new year to "maintain open lines of communication" with Beijing and "build on" a "productive discussion" Biden had with Xi in November. The likelihood of that happening has plummeted faster than the spy balloon off the South Carolina coast.

Biden wants stability, predictability and a reduction in tensions with China. He might still be operating on memories of his dealings, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who dramatically opened up China to the West in the 1990s. That was a long time ago, and Zemin's era has little in common with Xi's reign. There's room for a Republican challenger to argue that Biden's instincts on China are old, tired and far too trusting.

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Ernie Gates

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What's good for Biden politically is bad for the country

BY CLIVE CROOK

Bloomberg Opinion

President Joe Biden has a choice to make about the next two years, and it boils down to this: What's more important, being a successful president, or leading his party to victory? Sadly for the country, these goals can't be easily combined.

In his State of the Union address last week, Biden showed that he has chosen campaigning over governing. He didn't invite Republicans to join forces on points of agreement and seek incremental progress where possible. Mainly, he set out to provoke and embarrass his opponents — and succeeded. Ritual calls for bipartisanship were issued, but they were transparently insincere.

The sad part is not just Biden's choice — he is a politician, after all — but that his decision makes a certain kind of sense. U.S. politics is increasingly a contest between committed progressives and committed conservatives. I sit with much of the country — I'm guessing a plurality — in the moderate center, impressed with neither side and profoundly bored with the game. Neither party's main goal is to appeal to this center. For what might be good tactical reasons, it's more productive to enthrone your supporters and (which amounts to the same thing) enrage your critics.

Good government and pragmatic centrist compromise have much in common. The politically engaged have little appetite for either.

Biden's stunt over the future of entitlements was emblematic. He said Republicans want to "sunset" Social Security. The suggestion that any Republicans, let alone most Republicans, want to shut down the program was a distortion that provoked, presumably as intended, derision and rebukes on the GOP side. Biden then maneuvered his braying opponents into an ovation: "Let's stand up for seniors. Stand up and show them. We will not cut Social Security. We will not cut Medicare."

Thus did campaigning win out over governing. It so happens that the Social Security and Medicare programs are on track for technical insolvency — a readily solvable problem, by the way, provided it's recognized and dealt with promptly. Back in 1983, in somewhat similar circumstances, Biden voted for Social Security amendments proposed by the Greenspan Commission, which balanced the books in part by gradually raising the retirement age. Some such solution, involving a combination of tax increases and expenditure cuts, will be required again.

Biden could have proposed a new commission to study the options for maintaining the programs. He judged it better to ignore the problem, trench paralysis, and grin over the Republicans' embarrassment.

The president also applauded his success in engineering several bipartisan agreements during his first two years — most notably, the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill (which progressives held hostage for months before it was

eventually passed). But he cast these measures less as genuinely joint accomplishments than as progressive victories over Republican skepticism and as down payments on more radical tax and spending programs he remains committed to.

Democrats will ask: What's the point of seeking compromise with today's Republicans? A fair question. And the logic works the same for the other side. Neither party actually wants compromise, and both are delighted to accept the results for the way the country is, or isn't, governed.

In the end, no doubt, we moderates are to blame. The politically engaged — progressives and conservatives alike — can justifiably tell disgusted centrists with no strong partisan attachments, don't expect the government to work as you would like if you can't be bothered to participate. That's the problem in a nutshell. The center is disenfranchised, partly by its own lack of conviction. Its power subsides, the political temperature goes up, the quality of government goes down, and the cycle repeats.

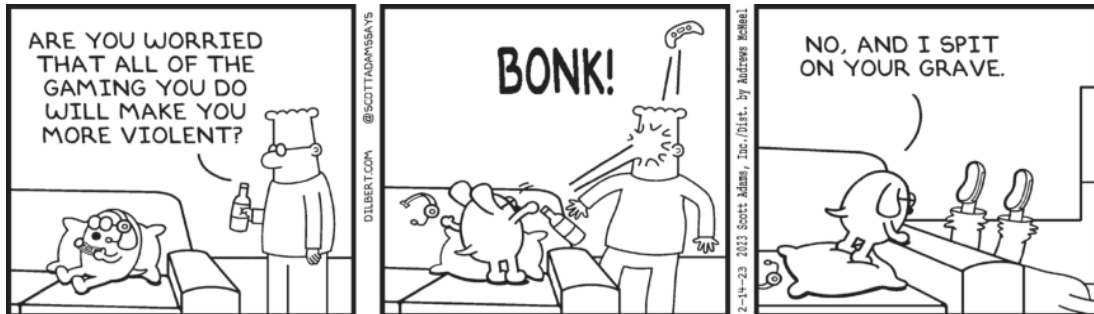
Once upon a time, politicians such as Joe Biden did actually seek bipartisanship and were a countervailing force. Those days appear to be over.

Clive Crook is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and member of the editorial board covering economics. Previously, he was deputy editor of the Economist and chief Washington commentator for the Financial Times.

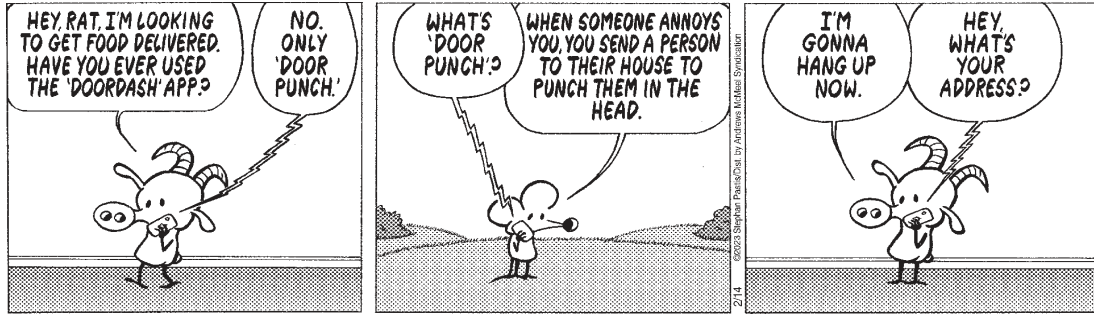
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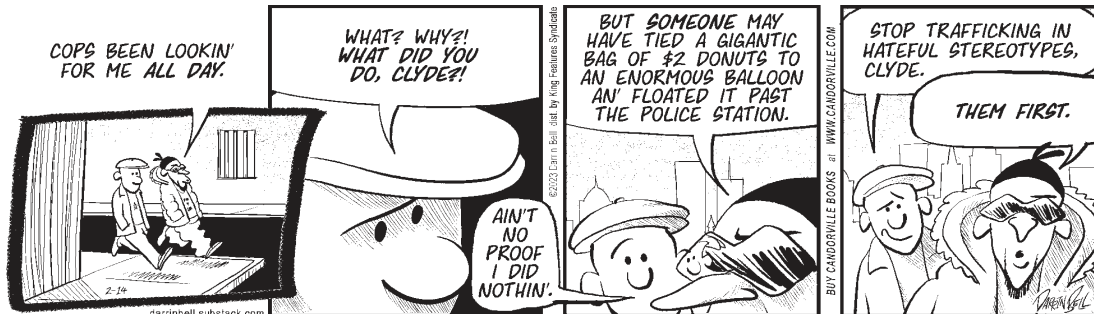
Pearls Before Swine



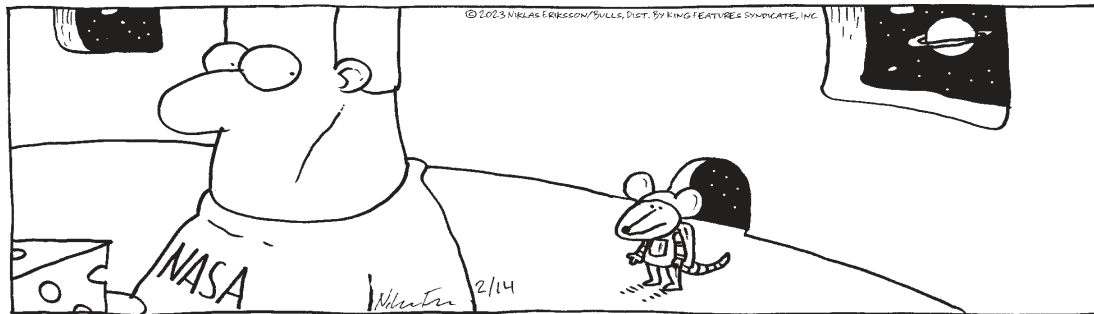
Non Sequitur



Candorville



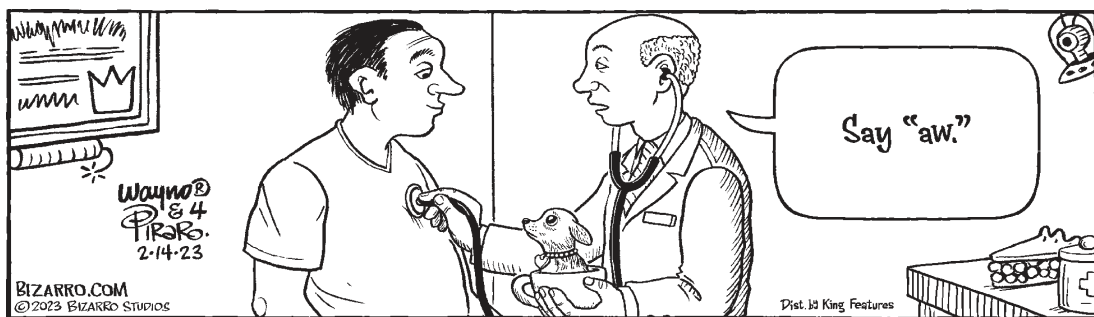
Carpe Diem



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 | | |

ACROSS

- 1 Tolstoy's Karenina
- 5 Hollywood's Thurman
- 8 Campus area
- 12 Katy Perry hit song
- 13 Crib
- 14 Celestial bear
- 15 Serenade, often
- 17 Mountain ht.
- 18 Miner's find
- 19 Trail the pack
- 20 Analyze
- 21 Parking place
- 22 Potent stick
- 23 Fancy neckwear
- 26 High school science course
- 30 Actor Schreiber
- 31 Romance
- 32 Bassoon relative
- 33 Nest locale
- 35 Madonna role
- 36 Fiddle stick
- 37 "Norma —"
- 38 Jeans material
- 41 PC alternative
- 42 "Terrif!"
- 45 Air freshener target
- 46 Valentine card sign-off
- 48 "Zounds!"
- 49 Super serve
- 50 Buffalo's county
- 51 Sleep phenomena

- 52 Ballot markings
- 53 Sports figure?

DOWN

- 1 Singer Guthrie
- 2 Former queen of Jordan
- 3 Cathedral area
- 4 "— you sleeping?"
- 5 WWII sub
- 6 Chinese dynasty
- 7 Director Lee
- 8 Co-founder and drummer of "The Roots"
- 9 Web addresses
- 10 On the briny
- 11 Folk hero Crockett
- 16 Small opening
- 20 Year in Cancun
- 21 Amorous couple
- 22 Uncle (Sp.)
- 23 PC key
- 24 Polite address
- 25 Middling grade
- 26 Jazzy style
- 27 Kimono sash
- 28 Understood
- 29 Verily
- 31 Dazzle
- 34 Male turkey
- 35 Apiece
- 37 Hotel posting
- 38 Active person
- 39 Perimeter
- 40 Linguist Chomsky
- 41 Maze runners
- 42 Garrison
- 43 Athletic shoe brand
- 44 Borscht base
- 46 Letter sealer
- 47 Guitar great Paul

Answer to Previous Puzzle

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | A | I | | I | F | S | | E | K | E | D | |
| A | C | M | E | | A | L | E | | M | E | G | A |
| S | L | A | M | | N | O | W | | I | G | G | Y |
| T | U | N | I | S | | P | U | R | L | | | |
| | | | L | A | P | | P | A | Y | E | E | S |
| O | P | T | I | M | A | L | | M | I | L | A | N |
| R | R | A | | W | A | G | | N | O | R | A | |
| B | R | A | C | E | | Y | A | P | P | I | N | G |
| S | T | Y | L | E | S | | B | E | A | | | |
| | | | A | N | O | N | | T | R | I | A | D |
| C | H | A | R | | L | E | G | | I | D | L | E |
| I | M | O | K | | T | R | U | | S | O | A | R |
| S | O | L | E | | I | D | S | | | L | I | N |

2-14

CRYPTOQUIP

ZTVP RTVC TVXIY S ZXM ESAUVY
 QDI RTV KXMUVRKXJJ RVXN,
 NC QISVPYM ATVIVY "TDDE
 TDDE TDDIXC!"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO VERY FURIOUS PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH FINANCIAL DEBT HAVE IN COMMON? THEY BOTH SEE RED.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals H

SCOREBOARD/NHL

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Sunday's men's scores

EAST

Canisius 85, Quinnipiac 65
Fairfield 76, Mount St. Mary's 72, OT
Iona 72, Niagara 55
Manhattan 68, St. Peter's 52
Siena 73, Marist 65

SOUTH

Memphis 86, Temple 77
N. Kentucky 86, IUPUI 47
UNC-Greensboro 97, Wofford 89, OT

MIDWEST

Cleveland St. 81, Youngstown St. 78
Iowa 68, Minnesota 56
Michigan St. 62, Ohio St. 41
Missouri St. 66, Evansville 60
Northwestern 64, Purdue 58
Robert Morris 71, Fort Wayne 64
Wichita St. 91, SMU 89, 2OT

FAR WEST

Cal St.-Fullerton 52, Hawaii 51

Sunday's women's scores

EAST

Coll. of Charleston 90, Delaware 56
Hartford 84, Villa Maria 31
La Salle 72, Duquesne 56
Manhattan 71, Rider 56
Maryland 82, Illinois 71
Monmouth (NJ) 70, Drexel 66
Stony Brook 70, Hofstra 60
Towson 60, UNC-Wilmington 44

SOUTH

Alabama 69, Auburn 46
Belmont 81, Indiana St. 69
Duke 50, Miami 40
East Carolina 79, Wichita St. 62
Georgia 81, Florida 55
Houston 71, South Florida 69
Louisville 81, Clemson 69
Mississippi St. 70, Texas A&M 62
Murray St. 80, Evansville 60
North Carolina 73, Boston College 55
Northeastern 72, Hampton 67
Pittsburgh 85, Georgia Tech 79, 2OT
Rhode Island 63, VCU 31
Richmond 75, Davidson 44
South Carolina 88, LSU 64
Tennessee 86, Vanderbilt 59
UMass 78, George Mason 57
Virginia 71, NC State 59
Virginia Tech 84, Florida St. 70
William & Mary 79, NC A&T 64
Winthrop 56, SC-Upstate 52

MIDWEST

Creighton 73, Xavier 53
Green Bay 75, Wright St. 55
Ill. Chicago 64, Drake 52
Iowa 111, Rutgers 57
Michigan 80, Nebraska 75
Michigan St. 81, Penn St. 75, OT
Missouri St. 71, Illinois 71
N. Iowa 83, Valparaiso 60
N. Kentucky 81, Milwaukee 71
Notre Dame 73, Syracuse 64
Oklahoma 85, Kansas St. 68
Purdue 76, Northwestern 61
S. Illinois 83, Bradley 59

SOUTHWEST

Arkansas 61, Missouri 33
Tulane 69, Tulsa 67

FAR WEST

Arizona 80, California 57
Colorado 65, Washington 43
Southern Cal 60, Oregon St. 56, OT
Stanford 96, Arizona St. 64
UCLA 67, Oregon 57
Utah 73, Washington St. 59

DEALS

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball
National League
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with LHP Caleb Smith and C Kevin Plawecki on minor league contracts.

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association
CHARLOTTE HORNETS — Waived G Reggie Jackson.
HOUSTON ROCKETS — Waived Gs Danny Green and John Wall.
ORLANDO MAGIC — Waived Gs Patrick Beverley and Terrence Ross.
SAN ANTONIO SPURS — Waived F Stanley Johnson.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League
COLORADO AVALANCHE — Assigned D Brad Hunt to Colorado (AHL).
FLORIDA PANTHERS — Recalled LW Grigori Denisenko from Charlotte (AHL).
LOS ANGELES KINGS — Sent D Jacob Moverare to Ontario (AHL).
MONTREAL CANADIENS — Reinstated RW Joel Armia from injured reserve.
OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled G Kevin Mandolese from Belleville (AHL).

AP SPOTLIGHT

Feb. 14

1934 — The Toronto Maple Leafs beat the NHL All-Stars 7-3. The game is played as a benefit for former Toronto player Ace Bailey. Bailey suffers a skull fracture earlier in the season from a hit by Boston's Eddie Shore.
1936 — Maribel Vinson wins her eighth U.S. figure skating singles championship and Robin Lee wins his second consecutive men's title.
1951 — Sugar Ray Robinson wins the middleweight title with a technical knockout in the 13th round over Jake LaMotta in Chicago.
1953 — Bill Chambers of William & Mary grabs 51 rebounds in a 105-84 victory over Virginia.
1992 — Bonnie Blair becomes the first American woman in 40 years to win two gold medals in the Winter Olympics when she takes the 1,000-meter speed skating event.

TENNIS

Dallas Open

Sunday
At Styslinger/Altec Tennis Complex
Dallas

Purse: \$737,580

Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Men's Singles Championship

Yibing Wu, China, def. John Isner (5), United States, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (3), 7-6 (12).

Men's Doubles Championship

Michael Venus, New Zealand, and Jamie Murray (1), Britain, def. Nathaniel Lammons and Jackson Withrow (2), United States, 1-6, 7-6 (4), 10-7.

Cordoba Open

Sunday
At Estadio Mario Alberto Kempes
Cordoba, Argentina

Purse: \$642,735

Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles Championship

Sebastian Baez (4), Argentina, def. Federico Coria (6), Argentina, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

Men's Doubles Championship

Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni (2), Argentina, def. Fabien Reboul and Sadio Doumbia (3), France, 6-4, 6-4.

Open Sud de France

Sunday
At Palais des Sports de Gerland
Montpellier, France

Purse: Euro 562,815

Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Men's Singles Championship

Jannik Sinner (2), Italy, def. Maxime Cressy, United States, 7-6 (3), 6-3.

Men's Doubles Championship

Robin Haase and Matwe Middelkoop (4), Netherlands, def. Albano Olivetti, France, and Maxime Cressy, United States, 7-6 (4), 4-6, 10-6.

Generali Ladies Linz

Sunday
At Intersport Arena Linz
Linz, Austria

Purse: Euro 225,480

Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Women's Singles Championship

Anastasia Potapova (8), Russia, def. Petra Martic (6), Croatia, 6-3, 6-1.

Women's Doubles Championship

Natela Dzalamidze, Russia, and Viktoria Kuzmova, Slovakia, def. Nadia Kichenok, Ukraine, and Anna-Lena Friedsam, Germany, 4-6, 7-5, 12-10.

GOLF

WM Phoenix Open

PGA Tour

Sunday

At Stadium Course

Scottsdale, Ariz.

Purse: \$20 million

Yardage: 7,261; Par: 71

Final Round

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| Scottie Scheffler, \$3,600,000 | 68-64-68-65=265 | -19 |
| Nick Taylor, \$2,180,000 | 66-69-67-65=267 | -17 |
| Jon Rahm, \$1,380,000 | 68-66-68-68=270 | -14 |
| Justin Thomas, \$980,000 | 71-68-67-65=271 | -13 |
| Jason Day, \$820,000 | 65-71-68-68=272 | -12 |
| Sam Burns, \$652,500 | 70-71-64-68=273 | -11 |
| Tyrrell Hatton, \$652,500 | 70-67-67-69=273 | -11 |
| Sungjae Im, \$652,500 | 70-67-67-69=273 | -11 |
| Jordan Spieth, \$652,500 | 71-63-69-70=273 | -11 |
| Wyndham Clark, \$485,000 | 68-67-70-69=274 | -10 |
| Rickie Fowler, \$485,000 | 71-66-67-70=274 | -10 |
| Adam Hadwin, \$485,000 | 66-66-71-71=274 | -10 |
| Xander Schauffele, \$485,000 | 67-67-70-70=274 | -10 |
| Tony Finau, \$335,000 | 70-68-67-71=276 | -8 |
| Dylan Frittelli, \$335,000 | 74-65-67-70=276 | -8 |
| Charley Hoffman, \$335,000 | 68-71-66-71=276 | -8 |
| Beau Hossler, \$335,000 | 74-68-71-63=276 | -8 |
| Taylor Moore, \$335,000 | 69-70-67-70=276 | -8 |
| Patrick Rodgers, \$335,000 | 73-68-70-65=276 | -8 |
| Keegan Bradley, \$245,000 | 69-71-68-69=277 | -7 |
| Seamus Power, \$245,000 | 71-71-66-69=277 | -7 |
| Sam Ryder, \$245,000 | 69-68-69-71=277 | -7 |
| Chesson Hadley, \$174,000 | 70-71-68-69=278 | -6 |
| Si Woo Kim, \$174,000 | 72-69-67-70=278 | -6 |
| Kurt Kitayama, \$174,000 | 75-67-70-66=278 | -6 |
| Adam Schenk, \$174,000 | 70-67-71-70=278 | -6 |
| Scott Stallings, \$174,000 | 66-73-69-70=278 | -6 |
| Jhonattan Vegas, \$174,000 | 71-66-68-73=278 | -6 |
| Hayden Buckley, \$137,000 | 70-69-72-68=279 | -5 |
| Matt Fitzpatrick, \$137,000 | 70-71-73-65=279 | -5 |
| Hideki Matsuyama, \$137,000 | 74-68-67-70=279 | -5 |
| Jason Dufner, \$109,286 | 71-69-70-70=280 | -4 |
| James Hahn, \$109,286 | 70-68-72-70=280 | -4 |
| Billy Horschel, \$109,286 | 72-69-69-70=280 | -4 |
| Zach Johnson, \$109,286 | 69-71-71-69=280 | -4 |
| Matt Kuchar, \$109,286 | 72-67-71-70=280 | -4 |
| Rory McIlroy, \$109,286 | 73-67-70-70=280 | -4 |
| Kevin Tway, \$109,286 | 71-67-73-69=280 | -4 |
| Lucas Glover, \$87,000 | 71-70-70-70=281 | -3 |
| Max Homa, \$87,000 | 69-69-71-72=281 | -3 |
| Sahith Theegala, \$87,000 | 72-70-68-71=281 | -3 |
| Brian Harman, \$65,350 | 71-70-73-68=282 | -2 |
| Viktor Hovland, \$65,350 | 70-70-71-71=282 | -2 |
| Kyoung-Hoon Lee, \$65,350 | 73-68-71-70=282 | -2 |
| Adam Long, \$65,350 | 71-71-68-72=282 | -2 |
| Keith Mitchell, \$65,350 | 71-71-73-67=282 | -2 |
| Ryan Palmer, \$65,350 | 73-67-71-71=282 | -2 |



DERIK HAMILTON/AP

Flyers goaltender Felix Sandstrom makes a save on a shot by the Seattle Kraken's Adam Larsson during the first period of Sunday's game in Philadelphia. The Kraken won 4-3 to snap a -three game skid.

NHL scoreboard

NHL ROUNDUP

Eastern Conference

| Atlantic Division | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|---------|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF GA |
| Boston | 52 | 39 | 8 | 5 | 83 | 193 113 |
| Toronto | 54 | 32 | 14 | 8 | 72 | 181 145 |
| Tampa Bay | 52 | 34 | 16 | 2 | 70 | 187 153 |
| Florida | 55 | 26 | 23 | 6 | 58 | 192 190 |
| Buffalo | 51 | 26 | 21 | 4 | 56 | 188 177 |
| Detroit | 51 | 23 | 20 | 8 | 54 | 154 168 |
| Ottawa | 51 | 24 | 24 | 3 | 51 | 154 165 |
| Montreal | 53 | 22 | 27 | 4 | 48 | 144 194 |

| Metropolitan Division | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|---------|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF GA |
| Carolina | 52 | 34 | 10 | 8 | 76 | 175 142 |
| New Jersey | 52 | 34 | 13 | 5 | 73 | 181 139 |
| N.Y. Rangers | 53 | 31 | 14 | 8 | 70 | 178 141 |
| Washington | 55 | 28 | 21 | 6 | 62 | 169 157 |
| Pittsburgh | 52 | 26 | 17 | 9 | 61 | 169 163 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 56 | 27 | 23 | 6 | 60 | 162 155 |
| Philadelphia | 55 | 22 | 23 | 10 | 54 | 149 171 |
| Columbus | 53 | 16 | 33 | 4 | 36 | 135 204 |

| Western Conference | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|---------|
| Central Division | | | | | | |
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF GA |
| Dallas | 54 | 30 | 14 | 10 | 70 | 181 139 |
| Winnipeg | 53 | 33 | 19 | 1 | 67 | 171 138 |
| Colorado | 51 | 28 | 19 | 4 | 60 | 157 143 |
| Minnesota | 52 | 28 | 20 | 4 | 60 | 158 152 |
| Nashville | 50 | 25 | 19 | 6 | 56 | 140 147 |
| St. Louis | 52 | 24 | 25 | 3 | 51 | 162 190 |
| Arizona | 53 | 17 | 28 | 8 | 42 | 142 189 |
| Chicago | 51 | 16 | 30 | 5 | 37 | 125 186 |

| Pacific Division | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|---------|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF GA |
| Vegas | 54 | 32 | 18 | 4 | 68 | 177 152 |
| Seattle | 53 | 30 | 18 | 5 | 65 | 185 167 |
| Edmonton | 54 | 30 | 19 | 5 | 65 | 201 176 |
| Los Angeles | 54 | 29 | 18 | 7 | 65 | 179 183 |
| Calgary | 53 | 25 | 18 | 10 | 60 | 172 162 |
| Vancouver | 53 | 21 | 28 | 4 | 46 | 181 215 |
| San Jose | 54 | 17 | 26 | 11 | 45 | 166 204 |
| Anaheim | 54 | 17 | 31 | 6 | 40 | 135 223 |

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

| Sunday's games | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Vegas 7, Anaheim 2 | | | | | | |
| Montreal 6, Edmonton 2 | | | | | | |
| Seattle 4, Philadelphia 3 | | | | | | |
| San Jose 4, Washington 1 | | | | | | |
| Monday's games | | | | | | |
| Calgary at Ottawa | | | | | | |
| Arizona at Nashville | | | | | | |
| Florida at Minnesota | | | | | | |
| Detroit at Vancouver | | | | | | |
| Buffalo at Los Angeles | | | | | | |
| Tuesday's games | | | | | | |
| Carolina at Washington | | | | | | |
| Chicago at Montreal | | | | | | |
| New Jersey at Columbus | | | | | | |
| Ottawa at N.Y. Islanders | | | | | | |
| Florida at St. Louis | | | | | | |
| Seattle at Winnipeg | | | | | | |
| Boston at Dallas | | | | | | |
| Tampa Bay at Colorado | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh at San Jose | | | | | | |

Schwartz, Seattle edge Philadelphia

Associated Press
PHILADELPHIA — Jaden Schwartz scored twice, Jordan Eberle had a goal and an assist and the Seattle Kraken sapped some of Philadelphia's Super Bowl Sunday excitement with a 4-3 victory over the Flyers.

Eeli Tolvanen also scored and Philipp Grubauer made 18 saves for the Kraken, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Seattle entered in fourth place in the Pacific Division and two points out of third.

James van Riemsdyk, Owen Tippett and Patrick Brown scored for the Flyers. Philadelphia completed a homestand with its third loss in four games.

The pregame had a party atmosphere as the appetizer for Sunday night's Super Bowl featuring the Philadelphia Eagles versus the Kansas City Chiefs. Flyers players entered the arena wearing Eagles jerseys, matching many fans' choice of Eagles apparel. Defensemen Travis Sanheim and Tony DeAngelo sported Eagles winter caps during warmups, and Eagles legend Vince Papale pounded the drum before the opening faceoff.

Canadiens 6, Oilers 2: Jordan Harris had his first career two-goal game and host Montreal earned wins on back-to-back afternoons.

assists. Jake Allen made 30 saves. Leon Draisaitl and Evander Kane scored for Edmonton. Connor McDavid was left off the score sheet, ending a 15-game point streak.

Golden Knights 7, Ducks 2: Seven Vegas players had two points and the team scored five times in the third period to break open a one-goal game and extend its winning streak to three games.

Michael Amadio, William Carrier, Jack Eichel, Phil Kessel and Shea Theodore each had a goal and an assist. Paul Cotter and Brett Howden added goals for Vegas. Reilly Smith and William Karlsson each had two assists.

Isac Lundestrom had a goal and an assist, and Frank Vatrano also scored for the Ducks. John Gibson finished with 32 saves.

Sharks 4, Capitals 1: Erik Karlsson had a goal and two assists, Aaron Dell stopped all eight shots he faced in relief and visiting San Jose ended its road trip by beating Washington.

Karlsson assisted on a goal by Evgeny Svechnikov at even strength in the first period and Alexander Barabanov on the power play in the second to give him 55 this season, good for second in the NHL. Tomas Hertl added an empty-net goal with 2:11 left

Karlsson scored his 18th goal of the season in the third period on a shot from along the boards that fluttered by Charlie Lindgren. Evgeny Kuznetsov scored Washington's only goal and Lindgren made 29 saves.

NBA/COLLEGE BASKETBALL



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Celtics center Al Horford drives toward the basket as Grizzlies guard Desmond Bane defends in the second half on Sunday.

NBA ROUNDUP

White, Hauser help Celtics top Grizzlies

Associated Press

BOSTON — Derrick White scored 23 points to help a short-handed Boston team hold off Ja Morant and the Memphis Grizzlies 119-109 on Sunday.

Sam Hauser added 20 points, tying his career-high with six three-pointers, Al Horford had 16 points and Payton Pritchard added 12 for Boston, which won its fourth straight. Celtics star Jayson Tatum didn't have his sharpest game, finishing with 16 points but making three of 16 shots.

"That's the beauty of this team," said White, who also had 10 assists. "We're just so deep. We've got a lot of guys that can do a little bit of everything."

Morant led the Grizzlies with 25 points, seven assists and six rebounds, while Desmond Bane scored 18 and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 15 points and seven rebounds.

Boston was without starting point guard Marcus Smart, who missed his 10th straight with a bone bruise in his right ankle, as well as forward Jaylen Brown (facial fracture he suffered from an inadvertent elbow by Tatum) and reserve guard Malcolm Brogdon (sore Achilles).

Boston moved to 1½ games ahead of the idle Bucks for the Eastern Conference's best record ahead of their matchup in Milwaukee on Tuesday.

The Celtics were clinging to a one-point lead early in the final quarter before White scored six points — with a conventional three-point play and three-pointer from the right wing — during a 16-7 spurt that moved them ahead 104-94 with just over four minutes to play.

"We have some of our top dogs out now and it's just an opportunity for guys to showcase what they can do," Hauser said.

Raptors 119, Pistons 118: Fred VanVleet scored 35 points, topping 30 for a career-best ninth time this season, and Pascal Siakam added 28 points as host Toronto beat Detroit for its fourth win in five games.

Scottie Barnes scored 20 points and Precious Achiuwa had 11 points and 11 rebounds as Toronto won its second straight over Detroit after losing the previous six meetings.

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 33 points, and Alec Burks had 21 for the Pistons.

Warriors go through with 4-team trade

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The Golden State Warriors have decided to go through with a trade to acquire Gary Payton II from Portland despite concerns that arose surrounding the guard's health following offseason surgery for a core muscle injury that sidelined him until last month.

A person with direct knowledge of the situation said Sunday that the Warriors spoke to the NBA about how the Trail Blazers handled the deal and information about the medical situation for Payton, whose physical Friday

brought up issues that put the trade in jeopardy. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no details of the negotiations and discussions were made public.

The defending champions had until Sunday night to make a decision whether to rescind the swap that sent center James Wiseman to Detroit. Golden State also will receive unprotected 2026 and '28 second-round draft picks from Portland while giving up second-round picks in 2026 and 2028.

The Pistons traded forward Saddiq Bey to the Hawks and the

NBA scoreboard

| Eastern Conference | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Atlantic Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Boston | 41 | 16 | .719 | — |
| Philadelphia | 36 | 19 | .655 | 4 |
| Brooklyn | 33 | 23 | .589 | 7½ |
| New York | 31 | 27 | .534 | 10½ |
| Toronto | 27 | 31 | .466 | 14½ |
| Southeast Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Miami | 32 | 25 | .561 | — |
| Atlanta | 29 | 28 | .509 | 3 |
| Washington | 26 | 29 | .473 | 5 |
| Orlando | 23 | 34 | .404 | 9 |
| Charlotte | 15 | 43 | .259 | 17½ |
| Central Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Milwaukee | 39 | 17 | .696 | — |
| Cleveland | 37 | 22 | .627 | 3½ |
| Chicago | 26 | 30 | .464 | 13 |
| Indiana | 25 | 33 | .431 | 15 |
| Detroit | 15 | 43 | .259 | 25 |
| Western Conference | | | | |
| Southwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Memphis | 34 | 22 | .607 | — |
| Dallas | 31 | 27 | .534 | 4 |
| New Orleans | 29 | 28 | .509 | 5½ |
| San Antonio | 14 | 43 | .246 | 20½ |
| Houston | 13 | 43 | .232 | 21 |
| Northwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Denver | 39 | 18 | .684 | — |
| Minnesota | 30 | 29 | .508 | 10 |
| Oklahoma City | 27 | 28 | .491 | 11 |
| Utah | 28 | 30 | .483 | 11½ |
| Portland | 27 | 29 | .482 | 11½ |
| Pacific Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Sacramento | 32 | 24 | .571 | — |
| Phoenix | 31 | 27 | .534 | 2 |
| L.A. Clippers | 31 | 28 | .525 | 2½ |
| Golden State | 28 | 28 | .500 | 4 |
| L.A. Lakers | 26 | 31 | .456 | 6½ |

Sunday's games
 Boston 119, Memphis 109
 Toronto 119, Detroit 118

Monday's games
 Atlanta at Charlotte
 Houston at Philadelphia
 San Antonio at Cleveland
 Utah at Indiana
 Brooklyn at New York
 Denver at Miami
 New Orleans at Oklahoma City
 Orlando at Chicago
 Minnesota at Dallas
 L.A. Lakers at Portland
 Washington at Golden State

Tuesday's games
 Boston at Milwaukee
 Orlando at Toronto
 Sacramento at Phoenix
 Golden State at L.A. Clippers
 Washington at Portland

Wednesday's games
 Chicago at Indiana
 San Antonio at Charlotte
 Cleveland at Philadelphia
 Detroit at Boston
 Miami at Brooklyn
 New York at Atlanta
 Houston at Oklahoma City
 Utah at Memphis
 Dallas at Denver
 New Orleans at L.A. Lakers

Northwestern upsets Purdue

Experienced guards Buie, Audige help Wildcats close with 17-3 run against No. 1 Boilermakers

By JAY COHEN
 Associated Press

EVANSTON, Ill. — As Northwestern struggled through the past couple of seasons, Boo Buie and Chase Audige learned some tough lessons — on poise, and finishing strong, and competing.

That's how they got to Sunday, and one historic victory for the Wildcats.

Buie scored 26 points and Audige had 15, leading Northwestern to a 64-58 win over Zach Edey and No. 1 Purdue.

"We put in so much work together and we've been through so many ups and downs," Buie said. "It's finally starting to show what the real us is."

Led by its experienced backcourt and supported by a rowdy student section behind each basket, Northwestern (18-7, 9-5 Big Ten) added a signature win to its bid for the school's second NCAA Tournament appearance. The Wildcats got their first win in 19 games against the No. 1 team in the AP poll.

Northwestern's 18 wins are the most for the school since it went 24-12 during the 2016-17 season, losing to Gonzaga in the second round of the NCAA tourney. It went 32-55 in the previous three years before finding its stride again this season.

"We had a bunch of guys that stayed the course and stayed loyal to the program and fought," Northwestern coach Chris Collins said, "and we had a great offseason."

"When you have a day like this, you know it can be emotional be-

cause you know there's a lot of hard work by a lot of people to make this happen."

Purdue (23-3, 12-3) had won 11 in a row against Northwestern, but the Boilermakers stumbled down the stretch. They shot just 28.6% (6-for-21) and committed 13 of their 16 turnovers in the second half.

Edey had 24 points, eight rebounds and three blocked shots, but the 7-foot-4 center turned it over six times. Freshman Braden Smith had 10 points on 1-for-7 shooting.

"Just got to show more poise and toughness than we did," Purdue coach Matt Painter said.

Edey's hook shot lifted Purdue to a 55-47 lead with 3:52 to go. But Northwestern closed the game with a 17-3 run.

The decisive stretch began with a huge offensive rebound by Buie, setting up Audige's three-pointer. Audige then had a fast-break dunk, and he just kept going from there.

Audige scored 10 points in Northwestern's dazzling finish. He gave the Wildcats the lead for good when he made a three-pointer after an Edey turnover.

"When my team needed me, I just tried my best to be there," Audige said. "A shot went through, and then the rim started looking a little bigger."

Brooks Barnhizer had a fast-break layup and Buie made two foul shots in the final minute to help Northwestern hold on. When it was over, the jubilant student sections stormed the court to celebrate with the team.



NAM Y. HUH/AP

Northwestern guard Boo Buie, right, drives to the basket against Purdue guard Ethan Morton during the second half on Sunday.

SUPER BOWL



MATT SLOCUM, ABOVE, AND ASHLEY LANDIS, BELOW/AP

Above: Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Kadarius Toney carries the ball down to the Philadelphia 5-yard line Sunday during a 65-yard punt return in the second half of Super Bowl 57 in Glendale, Ariz. **Below:** Toney practically walks into the end zone on a 5-yard touchdown catch during the second half.

KC's Toney makes most of his limited touches

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Kadarius Toney's struggles with injuries and inconsistency prompted the New York Giants to give up on him midway through his second NFL season.

The Kansas City Chiefs gave him a second chance and the talented receiver proved he's no first-round bust.

A small part of Kansas City's offensive game plan, Toney made history and two of the biggest plays in the Chiefs' 38-35 Super Bowl win over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night.

"It is the biggest game of my life," Toney said. "It was, for real."

Hobbled by a sprained ankle that knocked him out of the AFC championship game, Toney took advantage of the two-week break before the Super Bowl. He received treatment the first week, returned to practice Monday in the desert and made the most of his limited touches in the Super Bowl.

Toney wasn't a big part of Kansas City's offense through the first three quarters as the teams traded touchdowns and big plays. In fact, he played no part, at least beyond blocking and running safeties off other routes.

Patrick Mahomes, himself hobbled by a sprained ankle, did not target Toney once, opting to go in the direction of Travis Kelce, JuJu Smith-Schuster and his running backs.



Once Mahomes did look his way, Toney made a massive impact, catching a 5-yard touchdown after the Eagles left him wide open that gave the Chiefs a 28-27 lead early in the fourth quarter.

"We saw something a little bit different on tape and we knew that we could take advantage of what they weren't doing," Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy said. "And Kadarius just did a hell of a job of finding a way to get himself open."

On Toney's next touch — also his last — he ran all the way into the record book.

Kansas City's defense held, forcing the Eagles to punt. Toney

caught Arryn Siposs' line-drive punt at the Chiefs' 30-yard, started to the left, then juiced his way out of a tackle before reversing course. Picking up a wall of blockers, Toney raced down the right sideline before the Eagles finally closed in on him at Philadelphia's 5-yard line.

The 65-yard punt return, the longest in Super Bowl history, set up Mahomes' 4-yard TD pass to Skyy Moore that gave Kansas City a 35-28 lead.

"I saw a lot of white jerseys in front of me," Toney said. "At that moment I was really excited to get the ball."

Toney had been waiting for this moment since the Giants used the 20th overall pick to draft him out of Florida in 2021.

The 6-foot, 193-pound receiver had a breakout season with the Gators as a senior, finishing with 70 catches for 984 yards and a touchdowns. Once with New York, Toney suffered through multiple injuries. He played in 12 of 24 games for the Giants, totaling 41 catches for 420 yards.

Toney was traded to Kansas City on Oct. 27 for third- and sixth-round draft picks. He caught two touchdown passes for the Chiefs, but again struggled to stay healthy. Toney was limited to one catch for 9 yards before hurting his ankle against the Cincinnati Bengals in the AFC title game.

He recovered in time to make two of the biggest plays in the biggest game of his life.

Players struggle with slippery field

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — The field at State Farm Stadium turned into a Super Bowl slip and slide.

With the surface seeming to get worse as the night wore on, players from both teams had a hard time keeping their footing on Sunday, leading several to change their cleats during a game that ended with the Kansas City Chiefs' dramatic 38-35 comeback win over the Philadelphia Eagles.

"It was like playing on a water park," Eagles left tackle Jordan Mailata said.

State Farm Stadium has a history of slippery fields.

Players complained about field conditions at the BCS National Championship between Oregon and Auburn in 2010. Same thing in the College Football Playoff title game between Alabama and Clemson in 2015. The Fiesta Bowl has had its share of grassy slipups as well.

The Super Bowl was no different — even after the NFL spent nearly two years preparing the field.

Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes slipped while trying to make a cut, but was able to gain a few more yards. Kansas City receiver Skyy Moore lost his footing on a jet sweep and running back Isiah Pacheco even slipped during his celebration after scoring a touchdown.

Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts and tight end Dallas Goedert were among the players who changed cleats to get better traction.

"I changed my cleats and right before the second half wore the different ones," Goedert said. "The second half, you know, the field was tearing up a little bit but, you know, once again, we're playing on the same field as the Chiefs."

It's not the first time this season Kansas City has had footing prob-



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Philadelphia Eagles tight end Dallas Goedert, top, said he changed his cleats at halftime in order to get better traction on the State Farm Stadium turf that caused problems for both teams.

lems at State Farm Stadium.

In their season opener against the Arizona Cardinals, the Chiefs had all kinds of trouble with the playing surface.

First-round pick Trent McDuffie, who had earned a starting job, injured his hamstring when he slipped and ended up on injured reserve.

Kicker Harrison Butker also got injured when his plant foot slipped on a kickoff, forcing him to miss games and ultimately change his entire approach to kicking for the remainder of the season.

It happened again in the Super Bowl, though both teams felt the slippage.

"It's not like we were playing on ice and they were playing on grass," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said. "We all had to play on it. We all have to figure out our shoes."

The grass at State Farm Stadium is on a giant tray that is rolled in and out of the retractable roof stadium. The field sits out in the Arizona sun on warm days and is brought back inside when it gets cold.



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster loses his footing after catching a pass while being defended by Philadelphia Eagles cornerback Avonte Maddox during the second half.

SUPER BOWL



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce hugs his mother Donna, after the Super Bowl on Sunday. Kansas City defeated the Eagles 38-35. Travis' older brother Jason was on the Philadelphia sideline.

Chiefs tight end wins Kelce brothers battle

BY DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Travis Kelce finished off what he called the best year of his life with a second Super Bowl title.

This one came at the expense of his big brother.

The Chiefs tight end hauled in six catches for a team-leading 81 yards and a touchdown Sunday night, helping Kansas City rally from a 10-point halftime hole to beat Jason Kelce and the Philadelphia Eagles 38-35 at State Farm Stadium.

"I got closer to my brother. Got to meet him at the mountaintop," the younger Kelce said. "Best feeling in the world."

Travis Kelce got emotional when he began talking about his mother, Donna Kelce, who became a star in her own right during Super Bowl week. She was featured during pregame wearing a custom outfit that was half Chiefs and half Eagles, along with a pair of shoes with Jason Kelce's number on the right and Travis Kelce's number on the left, earrings representing each team and a tote bag that had both her sons' numbers and "Mama Kelce" on it.

She was clearly playing no favorites on Sunday night. There could be only one winner, though.

Jason Kelce did all he could to help the Eagles add another Lombardi Trophy to the one he won in 2018. The burly center paved the way for Jalen Hurts to throw for 304 yards and a touchdown while running for 70 yards and three more scores, and he helped the Eagles drive downfield in the fourth quarter for a tying touchdown and two-point conversion.

The Chiefs still had time in a 35-all game for his All-Pro little

"There's nothing really I could say to him, other than I love him and he played a hell of a year, a hell of a season."

Travis Kelce

Chiefs TE on postgame conversation with Eagles center Jason Kelce

brother and Patrick Mahomes to go to work.

With about three minutes to go, the two connected for a nice completion early in the drive, helping Kansas City into rhythm as it drove for a go-ahead score. The Chiefs eventually moved near the Philadelphia goal line, aided by a questionable penalty for defensive holding, before Harrison Butker drilled a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds to go.

The Eagles threw incomplete on the game's final play as Travis Kelce and the Chiefs raced off the sideline to celebrate.

Then, old No. 87 tried to find his big brother amid the showering confetti.

"In a situation like that, there's not a lot you can say to a loved one," Travis Kelce said, tearing up. "You joke around all the time and say that you want to beat your brother on the biggest stage ever, but it's a weird feeling.

"There's nothing really I could say to him, other than I love him and he played a hell of a year, a hell of a season."

Question of catch raised again on the biggest stage

Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — A catch or not a catch? That's still a good question.

And it was asked a few more times during the Super Bowl between the Kansas City Chiefs and Philadelphia Eagles.

By the players and coaches — and millions more on social media and in front of their TVs at home.

According to Rule 3, Section 2, Article 7 of the NFL Rulebook: "A catch is made when a player inbounds secures possession of a pass, kick, or fumble that is in flight."

But it was a bit more complicated than that on the NFL's biggest stage.

In the third quarter of Kansas City's 38-35 victory Sunday, Philadelphia faced third-and-14 when Jalen Hurts found Dallas Goedert along the right sideline and the Eagles tight end caught the ball, bobbled it and caught it again while going out of bounds.

The play was ruled a completion on the field and the Eagles raced to the line of scrimmage. But because the play ended on the sideline, play was ruled dead because Kansas City needed to have time to match Philadelphia's player substitutions.

That gave the Chiefs time to challenge the catch. But a video review confirmed Goedert had secured the ball before going out of bounds.

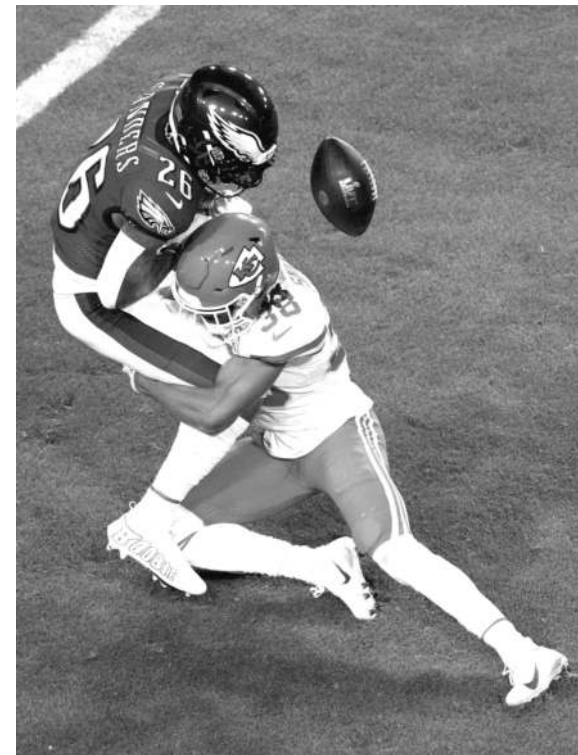
The Eagles were on the opposite end of that near the end of the first half when Hurts' deep pass to DeVonta Smith was ruled incomplete because he didn't control the ball as he made contact with the ground.

Smith had made an acrobatic grab, securing the ball against his helmet — but the ball moved slightly as he hit the ground. It was initially ruled a catch, but overturned on the review.

"What's a catch? Lol," former NFL defensive end and current ESPN analyst Marcus Spears wrote on Twitter, echoing the thoughts of many similarly confused viewers.

"It is a catch, or an interception, if, in the process of attempting to possess the ball, a player secures control of the ball prior to it touching the ground," the NFL Rulebook says, "and that control is maintained during and after the ball has touched the ground."

The whole catch-or-not debate came up again on Philadelphia's opening drive of the second half when Hurts threw a short pass to Miles Sanders — who was immediately walloped by L'Jarius Sneed. The ball



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Chiefs comeback L'Jarius Sneed knocks the ball loose from the Eagles' Miles Sanders. The call on the field was a catch and fumble, which Kansas City returned for a TD. Replay ruled it was an incomplete pass.

came loose and Nick Bolton — who already returned a fumble for a touchdown earlier — picked up the ball and headed to the end zone again.

The call on the field by officials was a touchdown by Bolton, but a review overturned the call with the play ruled an incomplete pass because Sanders never completed the reception.

"It's 2023 and we still don't know what's consider a catch," veteran free agent cornerback Prince Amukamara tweeted.

And for some, it will simply remain one of life's mysteries.

"What's a star? What's a hold? What is love?" former soccer star and current TV analyst Alexi Lalas wrote on Twitter.



Eagles wide receiver DeVonta Smith has the ball on his helmet as he is taken to the ground out of bounds by Sneed. Smith was ruled to have lost control of the ball, resulting in an incomplete pass.

SUPER BOWL

Magic: Chiefs burned time off clock before winning field goal

FROM PAGE 24

knowing that he's had success in two different organizations, but this was the better one."

With the score tied at 35-35, the Eagles tried to let the Chiefs score a touchdown with under two minutes left so they could get the ball back after a defensive holding call on cornerback James Bradberry on third-and-8 gave Kansas City a first down. But Jerick McKinnon slid at the 2, forcing the Eagles to use their last timeout.

"It was holding. I tugged his jersey. I was hoping they would let it slide," Bradberry said.

After Mahomes took a knee twice, Butker nailed his kick, sending thousands of red-clad Chiefs fans into a frenzy.

"It feels amazing just to see the confetti," said Butker, who missed a 42-yarder in the first quarter. "I just tried to focus on one kick and focusing on the process."

The Chiefs won their second Super Bowl following the 2019 season, 50 years after the first one. Mahomes led them back from a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter against San Francisco in that one. It took just three years to get another Lombardi.

Chiefs fans were outnumbered in the stadium, but did their part to silence the boisterous Philly fans with the tomahawk chop chant.

Down 24-14 with a limping Mahomes, the Chiefs (17-3) followed up Rihanna's electrifying halftime performance with a sensational offensive outburst.

Mahomes, who suffered a high ankle sprain in the divisional round, hurt it again on a 3-yard scramble late in the second quar-



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Chiefs running back Isiah Pacheco gets brought down by Eagles safety Marcus Epps during the first half of Super Bowl 57 in Glendale, Ariz.

ter. He limped off the field but showed no ill effects on Kansas City's next possession.

"I knew it was pretty bad when he got up limping but I knew it wasn't gonna be bad enough to where he was gonna pull himself off the field," Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy said. "If we would've pulled him off, I would've had to fight him. He would've probably fought me. And so it wasn't worth entertaining."

Mahomes slipped — several players lost their footing on the natural grass surface — in the pocket yet somehow regained his balance and scrambled 14 yards to the Eagles 4, setting up Isiah Pacheco's 1-yard TD run that cut the deficit to 24-21.

Mahomes then tossed a 5-yard

TD pass to a wide-open Kadarius Toney to give Kansas City its first lead, 28-27, early in the fourth quarter.

After the Chiefs tightened up their defense, forcing Philly to punt, Toney returned a line-drive kick 65 yards to the Eagles 5 for the longest punt return in Super Bowl history.

On third down from the 4, Mahomes connected with Skyy Moore to extend their lead to 35-27. Moore also was wide open on the play.

But the Eagles wouldn't go away.

Hurts hit DeVonta Smith for a 45-yard gain to the Chiefs 2 and ran in for his third score of the game. He also ran in for the two-point conversion to tie it at 35-35 with 5:15 to go.

As "Fly! Eagles! Fly!" reverberated throughout the stadium, Mahomes and the Chiefs went back to work.

The 27-year-old Mahomes became the third player to win his second NFL MVP award before age 28. He also became the youngest QB to start three Super Bowls. Mahomes finally broke the MVP curse, becoming the first player to win the Super Bowl the same season after nine straight players lost.

Just five years after winning the first Super Bowl in franchise history, the Eagles (16-4) came close with a different coach and new quarterback. Nick Sirianni replaced Doug Pederson in 2021 and Hurts took over for Carson Wentz in late 2020.

Hurts set a Super Bowl record with 70 yards rushing and tied a



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Eagles tight end Dallas Goedert picks up yardage after catching a pass during the first half. Goedert had six receptions for 60 yards.

record with three rushing scores. He also threw for 304 yards and one TD.

"We use this pain, we use this failure to motivate us so we can make it a strength," Sirianni said.

Hurts, who missed two games late in the season with a shoulder injury, had TD runs of 1 and 4 yards in the first half along with a 45-yard TD pass to A.J. Brown.

But Hurts also made a rare mistake when he fumbled without being hit while scrambling away from pressure. Nick Bolton picked it up and raced 36 yards for a score that made it 14-14. Hurts had just eight turnovers this season, six picks and two fumbles.

Mahomes finished 21-for-27 for 182 yards with three TDs and no turnovers. He ran for 44 yards.

Mahomes connected with Kelce on an 18-yard TD pass in the right corner to tie it at 7-7 in the first quarter. The Chiefs' All-Pro tight end and Eagles All-Pro center Jason Kelce became the first set of brothers to play against each other in the Super Bowl.

Their mom, Donna Kelce, wore a half-red, half-green jersey with No. 87 on the front for Travis and No. 62 on the back for Jason. She sat in a suite between NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and Damar Hamlin.

Eagles fans turned State Farm Stadium into a sea of green, chanting "E-A-G-L-E-S!" and singing the team's fight song after each score. But they left disappointed.

Multiple Super Bowl Champions

Six Titles

New England Patriots (2002, 2004, 2005, 2015, 2017, 2019)
Pittsburgh Steelers (1975, 1976, 1979, 1980, 2006, 2009)

Five

Dallas Cowboys (1972, 1978, 1993, 1994, 1996)
San Francisco 49ers (1982, 1985, 1995, 1989, 1990)

Four

Green Bay Packers (1967, 1968, 1997, 2011)
N.Y. Giants (1987, 1991, 2008, 2012)

Three

Denver Broncos (1998, 1999, 2016)
Kansas City Chiefs (1970, 2020, 2023)
L.A./Oakland Raiders (1977, 1981, 1984)
Washington (1983, 1988, 1992)

Two

Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts (1971, 2007)
Baltimore Ravens (2001, 2013)
L.A./St. Louis Rams (2000, 2022)
Miami Dolphins (1973, 1974)
Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2003, 2021)

From the Associated Press

Reid won more games than any coach in team history during 14 seasons with the Eagles but the one knock against him was that he couldn't win the big one. Reid finally earned his ring in his seventh season with the Chiefs. They went back the next year and lost to Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Reid, who turns 65 next month, ended any speculation about his potential retirement.

"If they'll have me, I'll stick around," he said.

The first Super Bowl involving both No. 1 seeds since the Eagles beat the Patriots 41-33 in February 2018 lived up to its hype. It was the third-highest scoring Super Bowl and the Eagles scored the most points by a losing team.



MARCIO J. SANCHEZ/AP

Harrison Butker kicks the winning 27-yard field goal during the final seconds of the Chiefs' 38-35 victory Sunday night. Butker missed from 42 yards in the first quarter.

SUPER BOWL

Hurts' brilliant effort falls just short

By JOSH DUBOW

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Whether it was through the air or on the ground, Jalen Hurts dominated the Super Bowl offensively for the Philadelphia Eagles.

It just wasn't enough to outduel Patrick Mahomes.

Hurts delivered a record performance on football's biggest stage, throwing for 304 yards and a touchdown, running for 70 yards and three scores and adding a game-tying two-point conversion.

But Hurts could only watch from the sideline as Mahomes drove the Chiefs to the go-ahead field goal with 8 seconds remaining for a 38-35 victory on Sunday.

"It's tough," Hurts said. "We worked really hard to have this opportunity and to come up short, it's tough. There's always a lot to learn from, to have an opportunity to reflect on some of the things we didn't do and could have done. There is a lot to learn from tonight."

Despite ending up with the loss, Hurts put together one of the most prolific games in Super Bowl history, but became the first QB ever to lose the big game while leading his team to at least 35 points.

He set the record for most yards rushing ever by a quarterback in a Super Bowl, he tied Terrell Davis' record for most TD runs by any player, tied James White's mark with 20 points scored and joined Hall of Famers Steve Young and Joe Montana as the only players ever to account for at least 370 yards and four TDs (rushing and passing) in a Super Bowl.

"Jalen played the best game I've seen him play in the two years we've been together," coach Nick Sirianni said. "He was outstanding. I really thought he was in complete control and he did things with his legs in the run game, he did things with his arm in the pass game, made some unbelievable throws, unbelievable reads. I thought he played outstanding."

But the breakthrough season that ended with Hurts as the runner-up to Mahomes in the MVP voting also led him to be runner-up in the Super Bowl as Hurts became the first player to lose a Super Bowl despite accounting for four touchdowns.

Hurts started the game fast and never slowed down — but couldn't get a chance to win it at the end thanks to a defensive holding call against James Bradberry that gave the Chiefs a first down in field-goal range and helped them run out most of the clock.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts breaks away from the Chiefs' Mike Danna during the first half of the Super Bowl on Sunday. Hurts set the record for rushing yards by a quarterback and tied records for rushing TDs and total points. He also threw for 304 yards.

Hurts had one last chance. His desperation pass fell way short and he walked off the field in dejection.

It was a crushing way to end a brilliant performance.

"Jalen played a hell of a game," center Jason Kelce said. "On ground, through the air. He made obviously some huge throws. Both offenses came ready to go. It was kind of one of those things where probably whoever had the ball last was going to be in a good situation. We knew if we gave it back with five minutes

"Jalen played the best game I've seen him play in the two years we've been together."

Nick Sirianni
Eagles coach

He connected on a 45-yard pass to DeVonta Smith and then capped off the drive with a 2-yard run. He then ran it in himself

(remaining), you're hoping somebody makes a play. But that's a tough task. Patrick Mahomes is MVP for a reason."

Hurts scored on one of his patented sneaks on the opening drive, delivered a 45-yard scoring strike to A.J. Brown on the first play of the second quarter, added a 4-yard run late in the second quarter and then engineered a signature drive in the fourth.

for the game-tying two-point conversion but was mostly a spectator after that.

"That was a special performance that I don't want to get lost because of the loss they had," Mahomes said.

About the only thing Hurts didn't do right came when he fumbled while switching hands holding the ball, leading to a 36-yard fumble return TD for Nick Bolton in the first half.

"I touch the ball every play so obviously you want to protect it," Hurts said. "It hurt us. You never know what play it will be, but it hurt us."

But that one mistake did little to slow down Hurts, who converted a 28-yard run on a fourth-down keeper on the next drive to set up his second TD run of the game from 4 yards.

Questionable late flag takes drama out of ending

By DAVID BRANDT

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — A questionable late penalty on Philadelphia Eagles cornerback James Bradberry with less than two minutes remaining meant that a scintillating Super Bowl 57 had a bit of an underwhelming finish.

Kansas City won its second Super Bowl in four years by beating the Eagles 38-35 on Sunday in Glendale, Ariz. It was an exciting back-and-forth game that saw the Chiefs claw back from a 10-point halftime deficit.

One of the few gripes for football fans —

particularly Eagles fans — was the anti-climatic ending.

The Chiefs were driving and faced third-and-8 at the Eagles 15-yard line with 1:54 remaining when Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes threw incomplete to JuJu Smith-Schuster. But officials flagged Bradberry for defensive holding, which negated the incompletion and, more importantly, gave the Chiefs a first down.

Replays showed that Bradberry made light contact with Smith-Schuster, though it didn't appear to affect the play much.

Many fans — and some football commentators — disagreed with the call. For-

mer NFL tight end Greg Olsen wasn't happy with the decision on the Fox broadcast and ESPN and Amazon analyst Kirk Herbstreit was also critical on social media.

The only person who didn't seem upset with the call was Bradberry himself.

"It was a holding. I tugged his jersey," Bradberry said. "I was hoping they would let it slide."

Referee Carl Cheffers said it was a "clear case of a jersey grab."

"The receiver went to the inside and he was attempting to release to the outside," Cheffers told a pool reporter. "The defender grabbed the jersey with his right hand

and restricted him from releasing to the outside. So, therefore, we called defensive holding."

Kansas City was able to essentially run out the clock from that point forward. Chiefs running back Jerick McKinnon made a smart move on the ensuing down, purposefully sliding 2 yards short of the goal line instead of scoring a touchdown.

Mahomes then was able to kneel twice as the clock ran down after the Eagles used their final timeout.

Harrison Butker kicked a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds remaining that proved to be the winner.

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PHOTOS BY MATT SLOCUM/AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes holds the Lombardi Trophy after Sunday's 38-35 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Bowl in Glendale, Ariz.

Mahomes works his magic

QB leads Chiefs to second Super Bowl title in 4 years

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Patrick Mahomes was magical when the Kansas City Chiefs desperately needed him to pull off another Super Bowl comeback.

Playing on an injured ankle, Mahomes threw two touchdown passes in the fourth quarter and scrambled 26 yards on the go-ahead drive before Harrison Butker kicked a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds left to give the Chiefs a 38-35 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night.



Reid

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The Chiefs won their second NFL title in four years and two-time NFL MVP Mahomes earned his second Super Bowl MVP award.

"I thought guys just embraced the moment," Mahomes said about rallying from a 10-point halftime deficit. "In that first half, we were playing and doing some good stuff, but I felt like the guys were getting consumed by everything around us."

Mahomes and Jalen Hurts excelled in the first Super Bowl matchup featuring two Black starting QBs. But Mahomes turned it up in the second half after reaggravating a sprained right ankle.

"It took everybody to win the game," Mahomes shouted as red and yellow confetti littered the field.

Coach Andy Reid, who couldn't win the big game in Philadelphia, beat his former team to earn his second ring with Mahomes and the Chiefs.

"We wanted to get this so bad for him," Travis Kelce said. "His legacy in Philly lives on forever. ... There's a lot of pride in

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Philadelphia quarterback Jalen Hurts rushed for 70 yards and three TDs. He also threw for 304 yards and one TD.

Schwartz helps Kraken end three-game skid » NHL, Page 18

