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STARS AND STRIPES

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Committee advances Hegseth's nomination

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate Armed Services Committee on Monday advanced Pete Hegseth's bid to become President Donald Trump's defense secretary, sending his nomination to the Senate floor over the objections of Democrats.

The vote in favor of Hegseth, an Army National Guard veteran and former Fox News host, was 14-13. His nomination moved forward several hours after Trump was sworn in for his second term and likely will be approved by the full Senate, where Republicans hold a majority. The Senate vote could take place in the next several days.

Robert Salesses, a former Marine and longtime assistant defense secretary, is serving as the acting defense secretary until a new defense secretary is confirmed.

Republicans on the committee admitted Hegseth is an unconventional choice for the top Pentagon job — Trump had selected a four-star general, James Mattis, and then an Army secretary, Mark Esper, during his first term. But the Republican senators nonetheless rallied around Hegseth and said he would inject a "new warrior ethos" into the Pentagon.

Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the chairman of the panel, has said Hegseth will shake up the bureaucracy of the Defense Department, which has a budget of nearly \$900 billion and employs 3

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Border blueprint

President Donald Trump signs an executive order at a Presidential Inauguration parade event at Capital One Arena on Monday in Washington.

Executive orders on president's immigration agenda to face challenges

By REBECCA SANTANA,
GISELA SALOMON
AND ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump rolled out a blueprint to beef up security at the southern border in a series of executive orders that began taking effect soon after his inauguration Monday, making good on his defining political promise to crack down on immigration and marking another wild swing

in White House policy on the divisive issue. Some of the orders revive priorities from his first administration that his predecessor had rolled back, including forcing asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico and finishing the border wall. Others launched sweeping new strategies, like an effort to end automatic citizenship for anyone born in America and ending use of a Biden-era app used by nearly a million migrants to enter America.

Actual execution of such a far-reaching im-

migration agenda is certain to face legal and logistical challenges.

But in a sign of how the changes quickly played out, migrants who had appointments to enter the U.S. using the CBP One app saw them canceled minutes after Trump was sworn in, and Mexico agreed to allow people seeking U.S. asylum to remain south of the American border while awaiting their court cases.

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■ Panama bristles over Trump's canal comments
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■ Rundown of president's day one executive orders
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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Starbucks plans corporate layoffs in turnaround

Associated Press

Starbucks said Friday it plans an unspecified number of layoffs as it restructures its corporate staff.

In a letter to employees, Starbucks Chairman and CEO Brian Niccol said the Seattle coffee giant needs to ensure all work has a clear and accountable owner who can make decisions. The company also needs to reduce complexity and silos.

“Our size and structure can slow us down, with too many

layers, managers of small teams and roles focused primarily on coordinating work,” Niccol wrote.

The layoffs won't impact baristas in Starbucks' stores. Niccol said decisions will be communicated by early March.

“I do not take these decisions lightly, and I appreciate that this will create uncertainty and concern between now and then,” Niccol wrote. “I wanted to be transparent about our progress and our plans and ensure that you hear about this work directly from me.”

Starbucks has approximately 16,000 employees working in corporate support, roasting, distribution, warehousing and store development, including 10,000 in the U.S. and 6,000 in other countries. Starbucks said the layoffs will come from corporate support staff, but it won't say how many people work in those roles.

Starbucks saw disappointing sales over the last year as U.S. customers pulled back on their spending and customers in China flocked to lower-priced rivals.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Jan. 22)	0.94	Switzerland (Franc)	0.9081
British pound (Jan. 22)	\$1.20	Thailand (Baht)	33.98
Japanese yen (Jan. 22)	151.00	Turkey (NewLira)	35.6303
South Korean won (Jan. 22)	1404.00		
Commercial rates		(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769		
Britain (Pound)	1.2281		
Canada (Dollar)	1.4415		
China (Yuan)	7.3143		
Denmark (Krone)	7.1821		
Egypt (Pound)	50.2980		
Euro	0.9626		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7859		
Hungary (Forint)	396.28		
Israel (Shekel)	3.5675		
Japan (Yen)	155.61		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3083		
Norway (Krone)	11.3615		
Philippines (Peso)	58.42		
Poland (Zloty)	4.09		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7513		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3562		
South Korea (Won)	1439.88		

INTEREST RATES

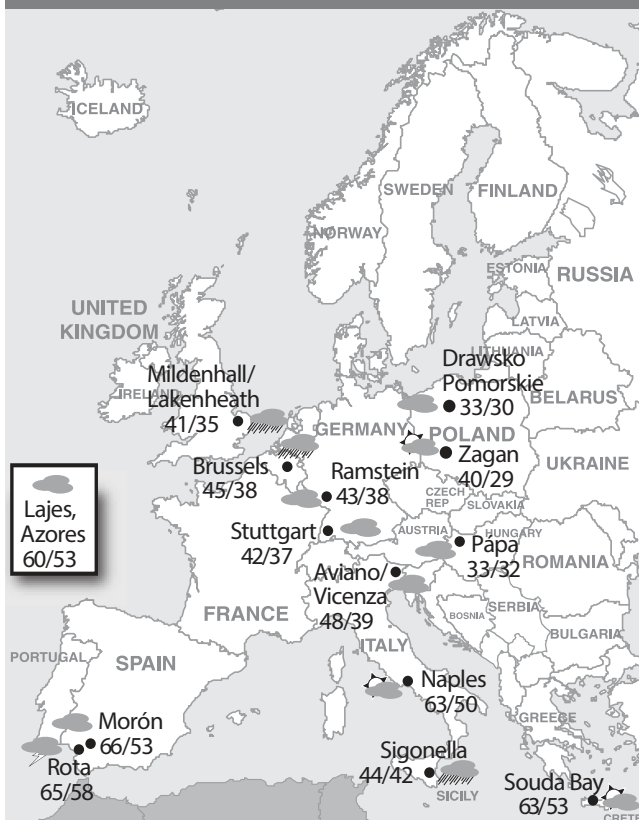
Prime rate	7.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	4.33
3-month bill	4.30
30-year bond	4.86

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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MILITARY

1st US shipment of Abrams tanks arrives in Poland

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Poland has its first batch of the United States' most modern battle tank, taking delivery of more than two dozen of them amid a broader military buildup in conjunction with its growing role in hosting American personnel.

The initial shipment of 28 M1A2 Abrams tanks arrived at the Polish port of Gdynia over the weekend, Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said in a statement Saturday.

By 2026, Poland is expected to have 250 such tanks as part of a 2022 contract with the U.S. The contract incorporates ammunition and other support vehicles and also includes 116 refurbished M1A1 Abrams

tanks, which began arriving in 2023.

For the Polish army, the Abrams tank serves as the centerpiece of a modernization effort that has picked up momentum in the aftermath of Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Patriot missiles, Apache attack helicopters, High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems and F-35 fighter jets are other major weapons systems that Warsaw has been busy adding to its arsenal.

In addition, Poland is seeking a bigger U.S. military footprint in the country on the heels of the 2023 foundation of Camp Kosciuszko in Poznan.

It's the Pentagon's first permanent base there and is the headquarters of U.S. Army Garrison Poland,



A U.S. M1A2 Abrams tank operated by a Polish crew fires during gunnery qualifications at Nowa Deba Training Area, Poland, on Thursday. The first U.S. shipment of M1A2 Abrams tanks to Poland under a 2022 contract recently arrived, Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said Saturday.

Polish armed forces

which has taken on a crucial role in deterring Russian aggression on NATO's eastern flank.

In recent years, Poland also has increased the size of its own ground forces, which now stand as NATO's

largest in Europe and third-largest overall behind those of the U.S. and Turkey.

Rutte: NATO defense spending set to kick into high gear

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — NATO countries are ready to “turbocharge” defense spending, the alliance's top official said this week as the security bloc prepares for President Donald Trump's anticipated push to get European militaries to do more.

Secretary-General Mark Rutte, in a statement Monday shortly after Trump was sworn into office, made the American president's top NATO issue his own.

“With President Trump back in office, we will turbocharge defense spending and production,” Rutte said, adding that Trump's often-stated mantra of peace through strength can be achieved through NATO.

The return of Trump will once again put European defense

spending levels at the center of the United States' approach to NATO. Over the past several years, NATO members have boosted investments, with about 20 out of 32 members hitting the alliance's benchmark of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense.

The gains, some of which came during Trump's first term, picked up momentum after Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

However, numerous countries still don't have a plan for immediately hitting the 2% target, let alone getting to Trump's more recent demand that the mini-



Rutte

mum spending level be elevated to 5% of GDP.

It's unclear what the consequences could be should allies resist Trump, who in the past has indicated an openness to quitting the alliance if they don't shoulder more of the security burden.

Lithuania, a Baltic state especially worried about Russian aggression, already has decided to ratchet up its spending level to between 5% and 6% of GDP.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda on Friday announced the decision, which puts the country in line with Trump's preference. The Baltic countries and Poland are among the top NATO defense spenders on a per-capita basis.

Warsaw said last year that it aims to get to the 5% level in 2025. Poland has been on a weap-

ons buying binge and over the weekend received its first batch of M1A2 Abrams battle tanks purchased from the U.S.

However, not all allies are on board. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said last week that going to 5% would only be possible with “massive tax increases or massive cuts to many things that are important to us.”

Still, other leaders in Germany, where federal elections are slated to take place next month, say Berlin needs to invest beyond the 2% of GDP level. Last year, Germany met the 2% threshold for the first time.

How Germany manages the defense spending debate with Trump could factor into White House calculations about the future of the American military presence in Europe.

At the end of Trump's first term, he sought to remove about 12,000 troops from Germany in connection with his complaints about the chronic low levels of domestic spending on defense by successive German governments.

French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking one hour before Trump's inauguration Monday, said European countries should prepare in the event the White House reduces its commitments in Europe.

“What will we do in Europe tomorrow if our American ally withdraws its warships from the Mediterranean?” Politico quoted Macron as saying. “What if (the U.S.) switches its fighter planes from the Atlantic to the Pacific? These are all scenarios we need to prepare for.”

Wake up and spend more on defense, Macron tells Europe

Associated Press

CESSON-SEVIGNE, France — French President Emmanuel Macron called on Europe Monday to “wake up” and spend more on defense in order to reduce its reliance on the United States for its security, in a speech to the French military as Donald Trump returns to power.

Macron referred to expected changes in Washington's foreign policy, especially regarding the war in Ukraine, saying it was an “opportunity for a European stra-

tegic wake-up call,” in his New Year's speech to the military at the Army Digital and Cyber Support Command based in western France.

“What will we do in Europe tomorrow if our American ally withdraws its warships from the Mediterranean? If they send their fighter jets from the Atlantic to the Pacific?” he asked.

Trump has criticized the cost of the war in Ukraine for U.S. taxpayers through major military aid packages and has made it clear

that he wants to shift more of the fiscal burden onto Europe. He has vowed to bring the conflict to a swift end, voicing hope that peace could be negotiated in six months.

France and Europe need to adapt to evolving threats and changing interests, Macron said. “Who would have thought a year ago that Greenland would be at the center of political and strategic debates? That's the way it is.”

He said providing lasting support to Ukraine is key so that Kyiv is in a strong position when engag-

ing in any future peace negotiations.

Ukraine must receive “guarantees” against any return of the war on its territory when hostilities cease and Europe must “play its full role” in the process, he said.

Last week, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he discussed with Macron about the possibility of Western troops deploying in Ukraine to safeguard any peace deal ending the nearly three-year war with Russia.

“As one of these guarantees, we

discussed the French initiative to deploy military contingents in Ukraine,” Zelenskyy said.

Potentially sending European troops as peacekeepers to Ukraine is fraught with risk. Such a move may not deter Russia from attacking Ukraine again in the future, which is the fear of Ukrainian officials, and could drag European countries into a direct confrontation with Moscow. That, in turn, could pull NATO — including the United States — into a conflict.

PACIFIC

Osprey loses load of MREs

BY BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

A Marine Corps Osprey accidentally dropped a load of rations weighing nearly 1,000 pounds into the ocean west of Okinawa during training last week.

An aircraft assigned to an unspecified squadron with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit was conducting routine parachute operations Thursday when it dropped a cargo pallet containing pre-packaged Meals, Ready to Eat off Ie Shima, unit spokesman Maj. Edward Pingel wrote in an email Tuesday.

The island is a few miles northwest of Okinawa's Motobu peninsula.

A spokesman for the Okinawa Defense Bureau, an arm of Japan's Defense Ministry, identified the aircraft as an MV-22 Osprey.

No injuries or damage were reported, and the Marine Corps notified nearby mariners to "prevent any potential interference or danger from the displaced cargo," Pingel said.

"Due to an unexpected shift in wind conditions, the pallet was blown off course and into the water instead of landing on Ie Shima [Auxiliary Airfield] as intended," he said.



JERED STONE/U.S. Marine Corps

A Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey carries cargo during 2018 training. An Osprey accidentally dropped a load of MREs into the ocean west of Okinawa during training last week.

"This incident is very regrettable because it caused anxiety and affected the local community," Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said at a news conference Tuesday. "We strongly urged the U.S. side for thorough prevention of recurrences and to take all possible measures for safety management."

Marines on Friday searched for the pallet — a 4 1/2-foot cube weighing between 880 and 990 pounds — but were unable to find it and called off the search that day, a spokesman with Okinawa's Military Base Affairs Division said by phone Tuesday.

"We think that it is necessary to file some kind of request to the Okinawa Defense Bureau and the U.S. military because the weight of this cargo is very dangerous," the spokesman said. "We are still considering it."

A similar incident occurred at the airfield on April 17, 2014, when an unspecified U.S. military aircraft dropped four 55-gallon drums of water outside the fence line but within the base's boundaries, he added.

Some Japanese officials may speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

The Marine Corps and Air Force use the airfield for training. In February, the Marines will begin work to reinforce the runway, with completion expected between June and September, Marine Corps Installations Pacific told Stars and Stripes in October.

"Safety of military personnel and civilians is our number one priority and all personnel involved have undergone the requisite training and have conducted rigorous planning to mitigate risk," Pingel said.

South Dakota-based B-1 bombers arrive for training on Guam

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Air Force bombers from South Dakota are back in the Western Pacific for the region's first bomber task force mission of the year.

At least two B-1B Lancers assigned to the 34th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., arrived Jan. 15 at Andersen Air Force Base, according to photos published Friday by the 28th Bomb Wing.

The long-range, heavy bombers are slated to participate in Bomber Task Force 25-1, part of an ongoing series of training missions intended to showcase the Air Force's "ability to deter, deny and dominate any influence or aggression from adversaries or competitors alongside allies and partner forces," according to photo captions on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

Squadron spokeswoman 2nd Lt. Alejandra Angarita acknowledged an email request for additional information on the deployment but was unable to provide a response by Tuesday afternoon.

The day of their arrival, at least one of the Lancers completed an aerial refueling over the South China Sea with a KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to 909th Air Refueling Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, according to a separate series of photos posted Thursday on Face-

book by the 18th Wing.

Also that day, a pair of Lancers were escorted in an airpower demonstration over the Sea of Japan, or East Sea, by South Korean F-15K Slam Eagles and Japan Air Self-Defense Force Mitsubishi F-2 fighters, the first overflight by U.S. allies of the new year. The Air Force did not identify the Lancers' home station.

The Air Force routinely deploys Lancers, B-52 Stratofortress and B-2 Spirit bombers to Guam and elsewhere around the world on task force missions, which began in January 2018 and have continued regularly since 2020. Plans call for replacing the Spirits with the B-21 Raider being developed by Northrop Grumman.

"While the missions for each BTF may vary, the overall goal remains the same: assure allies and deter adversaries," the Air Force Global Strike Command website states.

From Nov. 8 to Dec. 13, four B-52s assigned to the 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., deployed to England's Royal Air Force Fairford base. The bombers participated in nine operations with NATO and partner nations.

The last task force mission based out of Guam, Bomber Task Force 24-6, concluded June 25 and included B-1Bs from Ellsworth's 37th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, according to a July 5 news release from the 28th Bomb Wing.



ROBERT TRUJILLO/U.S. Air Force

A B-1B Lancer assigned to Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., parks on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, on Jan. 15.

WWII explosive removed from city building site on Okinawa

BY BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

Japanese troops removed and defused an American shell believed to be from World War II from a construction site in Okinawa's capital city over the weekend.

Five members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's 101st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit on Sunday moved the 5-inch shell by crane into an explosion-proof container and defused it, a spokesman for the city's Disaster Prevention and Crisis Management Division said by phone Tuesday.

The shell was discovered Nov. 28



NAHA CITY / Naha city

Japanese troops removed and defused this U.S.-made, World War II-era shell at a construction site Sunday in Naha city, Okinawa.

in the Matsuyama district of Naha city. About 60 people from 30 house-

holds and nine businesses were asked to evacuate during the re-

moval, according to the city's website.

The operation began at 9:28 a.m. and concluded ahead of schedule at 9:55 a.m., the spokesman said. Traffic was restricted to a radius of about 80 feet beginning at 7 a.m. and lifted after the removal. The shell was taken to a prefecture-managed warehouse to be detonated later, he said.

Some Japanese government officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

The discovery is the latest at Naha construction sites. Another 5-inch, U.S.-made shell found in October was removed from the Uebaru dis-

trict and defused in December.

The Japanese government has been ramping up searches for similar ordnance at airports across the country. The government began surveys in October at Miyazaki Airport on Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, after a World War II-era bomb exploded that month.

Magnetic surveys began in December at Naha Airport, along with airports in Sendai, Matsuyama and Fukuoka.

Crews disposed of nearly 22 tons of unexploded ordnance from WWII on Okinawa between April 1, 2023, and March 31.

MILITARY



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL EBERHARDT

A group photo of Young's Scouts in the Philippines in 1899. 2 soldiers from the unit were awarded the Medal of Honor that was approved more than a century ago.

2 soldiers in Philippine Insurrection to finally be given Medals of Honor

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Two soldiers will posthumously receive Medals of Honor for their combat heroics in the Philippines in 1899 that they never got because of a mix up with their mailing addresses, the Army said Thursday.

"It is a great honor to be able to correct a longstanding administrative error that prevented Pvt. McIntyre and Pvt. Harris from receiving the Medals of Honor that they both earned," Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said in a statement. "The Army takes seriously its commitment to honoring its heroes, past and present, and this presentation is one more way in which we can fulfill that commitment."

Mary Constance Schrepferman, granddaughter of Pvt. William Simon Harris, and Inez Larson, granddaughter of Pvt. James McIntyre, received the news Wednesday night from Wormuth, who was delegated the medal presentation by President Joe Biden.

Larson said she only knew of her grandfather's service in the military through letters McIntyre wrote to her grandmother before they were married.

"Our family did not know much about him due to losing him while his children were so young," she said. "Finding out about the Medal of Honor and the battles has made him a real person in all our lives, including my own grandchildren. We're flabbergasted at the strength and fortitude these men must have had."

Schrepferman said she was grateful for Wormuth's dedication to see this effort through to the end and for the call Wednesday. However, it was a bittersweet moment because her grandfather and so many who loved him will never know the recognition he earned. Her nephew Joe Harris, who worked to gather paperwork for the award, died and will never know his effort paid off.

"The Harris family is very hap-

py and relieved that our grandfather's Medal of Honor will finally be with his family, where it belongs," Schrepferman said.

The families began requesting the Army release the medals nearly two years ago after a historian uncovered the circumstances of the medals being approved but never presented.

During that time, Army Human Resources Command had to verify the paperwork and then the Army had to seek authorization from the White House to present the medals, since neither family wanted a formal ceremony in Washington.

Harris and McIntyre were approved for the Medal of Honor — the nation's highest military award for combat heroics — in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt along with 21 other members of a small outfit known as "Young's Scouts," a group sent out on dangerous assignments in the Philippines in 1899 during the Philippine Insurrection, said Michael Eberhardt, a Medal of Honor researcher and author. The insurrection followed the U.S. taking control of the Philippines from Spain during the Spanish-American War in 1898.

"For me as the researcher who discovered the relevant documents and their significance over two years ago, the Medal of Honor awards validate the belief that a persistent use of facts can ultimately persuade the federal government to correct a terrible injustice — no matter how old," Eberhardt said.

There is no other known instance of a service member being approved by the president for the Medal of Honor, yet not receiving it, said Gayle Alvarez, president of the Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States.

The elite group of scouts earned recognition for two battles in May 1899 — one in San Miguel and the other in San Isidro, according to Eberhardt's book, "The Medal of Honor: Its Dark Sides."

In each battle, the group of up to 25 scouts was outnumbered by hundreds but managed to complete their missions successfully. In San Isidro, the men recaptured control of a bridge.

Thirteen of the 21 men who were still alive in 1906 received their medals, Eberhardt said. It was policy at the time for the Army not to issue the Medal of Honor to a deceased soldier, so six men did not get the award. However, Harris and McIntyre were still living when Roosevelt approved the awards but never got the medals, he said.

Somehow, the letters mailed to the soldiers informing them of the awards were returned to the Army and no further effort was made to locate them, even though both received a veteran's pension and did short stays in U.S. soldiers' homes, Eberhardt said.

After discovering the oversight while researching his book, Eberhardt reached out to the Harris and McIntyre families to see whether they were interested in trying to claim the medals from the Army. Larson and Schrepferman agreed.

Wormuth's office is working with Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and newly elected Indiana Gov. Mike Braun, formerly a Republican senator from the state, to present the medals to the families in their home states. During the past year, Barrasso, representing the McIntyre family, and Braun on behalf of the Harris family sent letters to the Pentagon and advocated for the Army to award the medals.

"Military is pretty important in our family," said Ericka Cooper, Larson's daughter. Her father served in the military, as did her sons' father.

"I'm just trying to imagine, with the weapons they had back then and the methods of fighting, which is so different from what we have today. It is truly awesome to know that I'm related to someone like that," she said.

Okinawa loses suit on future Marine airfield

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

Japan's Supreme Court recently denied Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki's final legal challenge to stop construction at a future Marine Corps airfield in the island's north.

The Tokyo court on Thursday rejected an appeal in a lawsuit filed by Okinawa prefecture in September 2022 seeking to block changes to construction permits required by Japan's Ministry of Defense to finish the project, according to the prefecture's website.

The lawsuit was originally dismissed by a three-judge panel in Naha District Court in November 2023 after oral arguments in February, April and July that year. The prefecture appealed to the Fukuoka High Court, which also dismissed the case on Sept. 2.

The airfield is under construction at the Marines' Camp Schwab on land reclaimed from Oura Bay to replace Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in densely populated Ginowan city. The U.S. and Japanese governments agreed to move the base in 1996, but the prefectural government has repeatedly delayed construction.

"It is extremely regrettable that the Supreme Court dismissed us without any concrete judgment, since we had expected them to make a fair and neutral judgment based on the essence of local autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution," Tamaki wrote in a statement posted Monday on the prefecture's website.

"However, as the governor, who has been entrusted by the citizens, my position against the construction of the new base in Henoko has

not changed in the slightest," he wrote.

The construction zone is divided into two main sections: 279 acres on Schwab's north side and 91 acres in the south.

Work on the Oura Bay side, or north side, had been on hold since April 21, 2020, when Tamaki, citing safety and environmental concerns, refused to approve design changes meant to solidify the seabed.

He filed, and lost, three lawsuits, with defeats at the Supreme Court in August and September 2023.

Tetsuo Saito, at the time the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, approved the construction permits on Dec. 28, 2023, after Tamaki ignored a deadline from Fukuoka High Court.

Construction in Oura Bay resumed on Jan. 10, 2024.

On Dec. 28, contractors hired by the Okinawa Defense Bureau, an arm of Japan's Ministry of Defense, began ground improvement work to drive sand piles to ensure stability for the airfield, the bureau announced in a news release the previous day.

Construction on the project is expected to take until at least 2033 and cost the Japanese government nearly \$6 billion, Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said at a news conference Jan. 10. The airfield may be ready for use by 2036, he said.

The most recent dismissal ends a series of 14 construction-related lawsuits filed by both sides since Nov. 17, 2015. The prefecture lost 10 lawsuits, settled three and withdrew one, according to the prefecture's website.



BRIAN McELHINEY/Stars and Stripes

A crane floats on Oura Bay at the site of a future U.S. Marine Corps runway at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, on July 9.

MILITARY

Trump seeks border plan that could add troops

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump on Monday ordered defense officials to come up with a security plan that could include deploying more troops and drones and building up more barriers, such as the border wall.

Trump signed a string of executive orders in the Oval Office hours after his inauguration commencing his second term as president.

Among them was a handful of border-related orders, including Trump declaring a national emergency at the southwest border and calling for U.S. Northern Command to be assigned the mission within 10 days “to provide steady-state southern border security, seal the border, and maintain the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the United States by repelling forms of invasion, including unlawful mass migration, narcotics trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking, and other criminal activities.”

Military leaders can deploy “as

many units or members of the armed forces, including the Ready Reserve and the National Guard” deemed necessary to support the Department of Homeland Security, according to the order.

The defense secretary will have 30 days to report on what has been done to secure the southern border. The Senate could vote later this week on the nomination of Pete Hegseth, an Army National Guard veteran and former Fox News personality, to be the next defense secretary.

Any newly deployed troops would join about 2,500 National Guard members now at the border, according to the Pentagon. Those troops work a support mission that includes detection and monitoring, data entry, training, transportation, vehicle maintenance, warehousing and logistical support. This includes helicopter support for aerial reconnaissance in support of Customs and Border Protection personnel on the ground.

The new orders also direct the Pentagon to provide a report on



SAVION JOHNSON/U.S. Army

Engineers from the Texas National Guard construct concertina wire barriers on the bank of the Rio Grande in May 2023.

conditions within three months and make any recommended changes to the plan, including whether to invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807, which allows the president to deploy the military domestically for civilian law enforcement. This use of troops is limited by an 1878 law known as the Posse

Comitatus Act.

Monday’s executive orders are in line with promises Trump made on the campaign trail and comments he made during his inauguration speech.

“I will send troops to the southern border to repel the disastrous invasion of our country,” Trump

said during his inaugural address from the U.S. Capitol. “As commander in chief, I have no higher responsibility than to defend our country from threats and invasions, and that is exactly what I am going to do. We will do it at a level that nobody has ever seen before.”

Trump first deployed the National Guard to the southwest border in April 2018, then supplemented them with active-duty troops seven months later. The use of troops was later criticized by the National Guard’s top officer as having “no military training value.”

The federal troops are part of a mission separate from a state-sponsored deployment of the Texas National Guard, which has roughly 4,700 troops working alongside state police to deter criminal activity at the border. The mission, known as Operation Lone Star, began in 2021, and Trump praised Texas Gov. Greg Abbott during inauguration events Monday morning for his work at the border.

Border: Trump says he has ‘very good grounds’ to end birthright citizenship

FROM PAGE 1

“I will declare a national emergency at our southern border. All illegal entry will immediately be halted, and we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places in which they came,” Trump said in his inauguration speech to thunderous applause.

CBP One app disappears

The online lottery system gave appointments to 1,450 people a day at eight border crossings to enter on “parole,” which Joe Biden used more than any president.

It was a critical piece of the Biden administration’s border strategy to create new immigration pathways while cracking down on people who enter illegally.

Supporters say it brought order to a chaotic border. Critics say it was magnet for more people to come.

By midday Monday, it was gone.

Migrants who had scored coveted appointments weeks ago found them canceled.

That includes Melanie Mendoza, 21, and her boyfriend. She said they left Venezuela over a year ago, spending more than \$4,000 and traveling for a month, including walking for three days.

“We don’t know what we are going to do,” she said in Tijuana, Mexico, just on the other side of the border from San Diego.

Mexico to host migrants

The Trump administration is

reinstating its “Remain in Mexico” policy, which forced 70,000 asylum-seekers in his first term to wait there for hearings in U.S. immigration court.

Mexico, a country integral to any American effort to limit illegal immigration, indicated Monday that it is prepared to receive asylum-seekers while emphasizing that there should be an online application allowing them to schedule appointments at the U.S. border.

Immigration advocates say the policy put migrants at extreme risk.

“This is déjà vu of the darkest kind,” said Krish O’Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Global Refuge. She said policies like “Remain in Mexico” have exacerbated conditions at the border while doing little to address reasons migrants leave home in the first place.

End birthright citizenship

Anyone born in the United States automatically becomes a citizen, including children born to someone in the country illegally or in the U.S. on a tourist or student visa. It’s a right enshrined in the 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868 after the Civil War to assure citizenship for all, including Black people.

Trump’s executive order suggests that the amendment has been wrongly interpreted, and it would go into effect in 30 days — meaning it would not be retroactive.

The American Civil Liberties

Union and other groups immediately sued, calling it “a reckless and ruthless repudiation of American values.” Trump said he thought he had “very good grounds” for the order.

Fear of deportations

Trump is moving to realize his pledge of mass deportations of at least 11 million people in the country illegally.

One order restores efforts to pursue everyone in the country illegally, moving away from the Biden administration’s more narrow deportation criteria. He also wants negotiations with state and local governments to deputize police to enforce immigration laws.

As in his first term, Trump also wants to end federal grants to “sanctuary” jurisdictions — states and cities that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

Rocio, a 43-year-old single mother from Mexico who lives in South Florida, said she’s worried about her 13-year-old son. His father was deported when the boy was an infant, and he’s afraid the same thing could now happen to her.

Rocio, who asked to be identified only by her first name over fears about being detained, said she worries about driving without a license but needs to work to survive.

“We have to be very careful,” she said.

Erlinda, a single mother from El Salvador who arrived in 2013, has signed over legal rights to her

U.S.-born children, ages 10 and 8, to Nora Sandigo, who has volunteered to be the guardian for more than 2,000 children in 15 years, including at least 30 since December.

“I am afraid for my children, that they will live the terror of not seeing their mother for a day, for a month, for a year,” said Erlinda, 45, who asked to be identified by first name only due to fears of being detained.

Cartels as terrorists

A Trump order paves the way for criminal organizations such as Tren de Aragua or MS-13 to be named “foreign terrorist organizations.” MS-13 is a transnational gang that originated in Los Angeles and gained a grip on much of Central America. Tren de Aragua is a Venezuelan street gang that has become a menace on American soil.

“The Cartels functionally control, through a campaign of assassination, terror, rape, and brute force nearly all illegal traffic across the southern border of the United States,” the order reads.

Trump is also raising the possibility of invoking a wartime power act for the first time since World War II to deport gang members who are deemed members of a foreign terrorist organization.

Pausing refugees’ path

Trump also is indefinitely suspending refugee resettlement. For decades, the program has allowed hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and persecu-

tion worldwide to come to the United States.

Trump also suspended the refugee program in his first term, and after reinstating it, slashed the numbers of refugees admitted. Under Biden, the program was rebuilt to a three-decade high.

The refugee program is the type of legal immigration that the Trump administration says it’s for, said Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS, one of 10 resettlement agencies helping refugees start new lives in the U.S.

The first Trump administration said it needed more vetting. This time, it says immigration is straining American communities, Hetfield said.

“This is a complaint that I have heard nobody raise,” he said. “It’s going to be devastating for people who followed the rules and are waiting to get out of danger.”

What else is planned?

The incoming administration also ordered an end to releasing migrants in the U.S. while they await immigration court hearings, a practice known as “catch-and-release,” but officials didn’t say how they would pay for the enormous costs associated with detention.

Trump plans to “end asylum,” presumably going beyond what Biden has done to severely restrict it.

It is unclear what the incoming administration will do with people from countries that don’t take back their citizens, such as Nicaragua and Venezuela.

NATION

Rubio confirmed as secretary of state by Senate

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate quickly confirmed Marco Rubio as secretary of state Monday, voting unanimously to give President Donald Trump the first member of his new Cabinet on Inauguration Day.

Rubio, the Republican senator from Florida, is among the least controversial of Trump's nominees and the vote was decisive, 99-0. Another pick, John Ratcliffe for CIA director, is also expected to have a swift vote, as soon as Tuesday. Action on others, including former combat veteran and Fox News host Pete Hegseth for defense secretary, is possible later in the week.

"Marco Rubio is a very intelligent man with a remarkable understanding of American foreign policy," Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the senior-most Republican, said as the chamber opened.

It's often tradition for the Senate to convene immediately after the ceremonial pomp of the inauguration to begin putting the new president's team in place, particularly the national security officials. During Trump's first term, the Senate swiftly confirmed his defense and homeland security secretaries on day one, and President Joe Biden's choice for director of national intelligence was confirmed on his own Inauguration Day.

With Trump's return to the White House, and his Republican

Party controlling majorities in Congress, his outsider Cabinet choices are more clearly falling into place, despite initial skepticism and opposition from both sides of the aisle.

Rubio, who was surrounded by colleagues in the Senate chamber, said afterward he feels "good, but there's a lot of work ahead."

"It's an important job in an important time, and I'm honored by it," Rubio said.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune moved quickly Monday, announcing he expected voting to begin "imminently" on Trump's nominees.

Democrats have calculated it's better for them to be seen as more willing to work with Trump, rather than simply mounting a blockade to his nominees.

They're holding their opposition for some of his other picks who have less support, including Tulsi Gabbard for director of national intelligence and vaccine skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for health secretary.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said his party will "neither rubber-stamp nominees we feel are grossly unqualified, nor oppose nominees that deserve serious consideration."

Rubio, he said, is an example of "a qualified nominee we think should be confirmed quickly."

Senate committees have been holding lengthy confirmation hearings on more than a dozen of the Cabinet nominees, with more



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Chairman Jim Risch, of Idaho, second from left, embraces Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., President Donald Trump's choice to be Secretary of State, after he appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his confirmation hearing, at the Capitol, on Jan. 15.

to come this week. And several panels are expected to meet late Monday to begin voting to advance the nominees to the full Senate for confirmation.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously advanced Rubio's nomination late Monday. The Senate Armed Services Committee and Senate Intelligence Committee, respectively, voted to move the nominations of Hegseth and Ratcliffe. And the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee advanced nominees Kristi Noem as homeland security secretary and Russell Vought as director of the Office of Management and Budget, but with opposition.

Rubio, a well-liked senator and former Trump rival during the 2016 presidential race, has drawn closer to the president in recent

years. He appeared last week to answer questions before the Foreign Relations Committee, where he has spent more than a decade as a member.

As secretary of state, Rubio would be the nation's top diplomat, and the first Latino to hold the position. Born in Miami to Cuban immigrants, he has long been involved in foreign affairs, particularly in South America, and has emerged as a hawk on China's rise.

During his confirmation hearing last week, Rubio warned of the consequences of America's "unbalanced relationship" with China. While he echoes Trump's antiglobalist rhetoric, Rubio is also seen as an internationalist who understands the power of U.S. involvement on the global stage.

Rubio cultivated bipartisan

support from across the aisle, both Republicans and Democrats. He takes over for outgoing Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has said he hopes the Trump administration continues Biden's policies in the Middle East to end the war in Gaza and to help Ukraine counter Russian nomination.

The Senate is split 53-47, but the resignation of Vice President JD Vance and, soon, Rubio drops the GOP majority further until their successors arrive. Republicans need almost all every party member in line to overcome Democratic opposition to nominees.

Objection from any one senator, as is expected with Hegseth and several other choices, would force the Senate into procedural steps that would drag voting later into the week.

Nomination: Dems say lack of credentials, military views make Hegseth unfit

FROM PAGE 1

million people, and be an effective leader with the help of a team of experienced top officials.

Democrats, meanwhile, derided Hegseth's lack of traditional credentials and said his views on the laws of war and women in combat as well as accusations that he mismanaged two veterans organizations, excessively drank at work and sexually assaulted a woman in 2017 made him unfit for the position.

"If a service member had the same record of misconduct, they would be disqualified from holding any leadership position in the military, much less being confirmed as the secretary of defense," Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the

committee, said last week after Hegseth's confirmation hearing.

Hegseth waved away questions about his alleged transgressions during his hearing and claimed to be the victim of a "coordinated smear campaign" by anonymous sources and the media.

He would not say whether sexual assault, excessive drinking or marital infidelity disqualified someone from consideration for defense secretary.

"I'm not a perfect person, but redemption is real, and God forged me in ways that I know I'm prepared for," he said.

Hegseth has described himself as a "change agent" who, if confirmed, will weed out diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at the Pentagon and remove what he be-

lieves are quotas for women in combat roles.

He opposed women serving in combat positions before softening that stance as he sought support for his nomination.

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., an Army helicopter pilot who lost both legs in the Iraq War, excoriated Hegseth on Thursday in a speech on the Senate floor, saying his inability to name one international agreement the defense secretary would be responsible for and failing to answer other questions exposed his inadequacy.

"This was pitiful, yet predictable, from a guy who said that we women do not belong in combat, who's dared to claim that the military is lowering its standards so that we poor, fragile, fair sex and,

God forbid, us moms, can serve," said Duckworth, who sits on the committee. "The only standards being lowered today are the ones for secretary of defense."

Democrats also expressed concern about Hegseth's previous advocacy for pardons for service members charged with war crimes, support for the reinstatement of interrogation methods such as waterboarding and dismissive comments toward the Geneva Conventions.

Hegseth told senators that there was a "tactical distinction" between international laws and fighting on the ground.

"I've thought very deeply about the balance between legality and lethality, ensuring that the men and women on the front lines have

the opportunity to destroy... the enemy, and that lawyers aren't the ones getting in the way," he said.

Hegseth's plans for the Defense Department include a review of senior officers "based on meritocracy, standards, lethality and commitment to lawful orders they will be given" and the reinstatement, with back pay, of service members who were kicked out of the military for refusing to get the coronavirus vaccine.

He also said he opposes the use of federal funds for abortions, echoing an argument other Republicans have used to push for rescinding the Pentagon's travel reimbursement policy for service members in need of abortions and other reproductive health care.

NATION

Trump pardons Capitol rioters

1,500 people convicted of Jan. 6 crimes set for release, includes violent offenders

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER AND MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has pardoned, commuted the prison sentences or vowed to dismiss the cases of all of the 1,500-plus people charged with crimes in the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot, including people convicted of assaulting police officers, using his clemency powers on his first day back in office to undo the massive prosecution of the unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy.

Trump's action, just hours after his return to the White House on Monday, paves the way for the release from prison of people found guilty of violent attacks on police, as well as leaders of far-right extremist groups convicted of failed plots to keep the Republican in power after he lost the 2020 presidential election to Democrat Joe Biden.

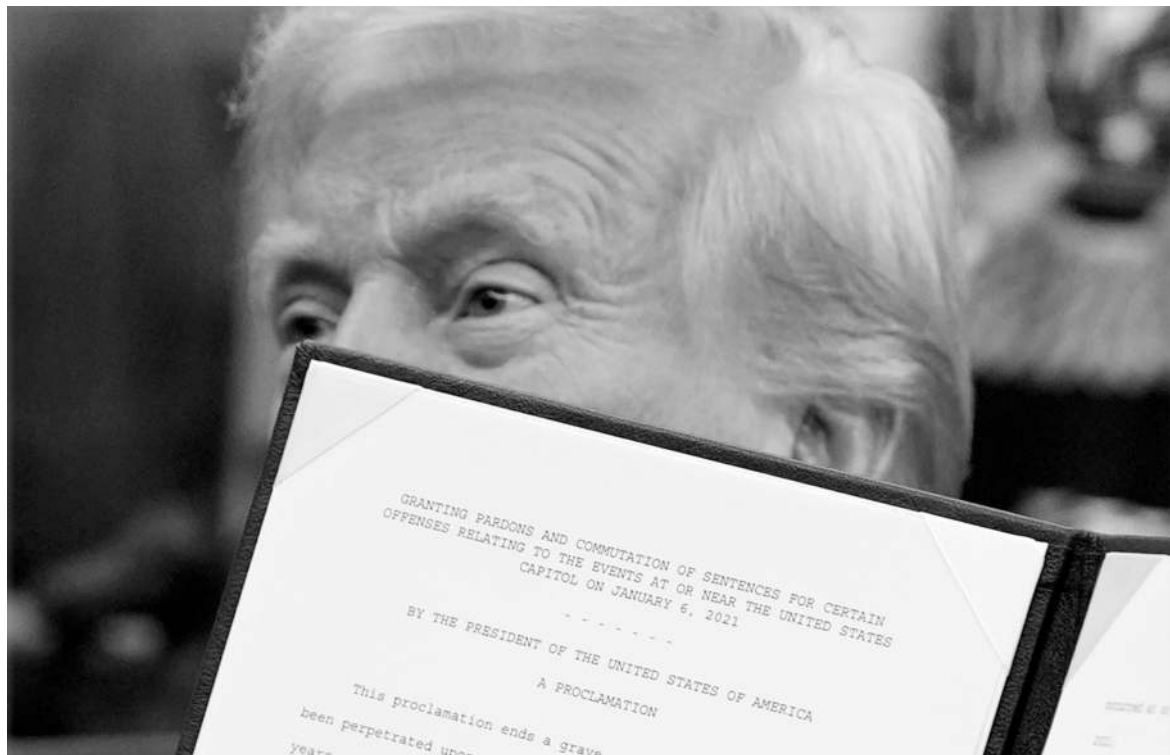
The pardons are a culmination of Trump's yearslong campaign to rewrite the history of the Jan. 6 attack, which left more than 100 police officers injured as the angry mob of Trump supporters — some armed with poles, bats and bear spray — overwhelmed law en-

forcement, shattered windows and sent lawmakers and aides running into hiding. While pardons were expected, the speed and the scope of the clemency amounted to a stunning dismantling of the Justice Department's effort to hold participants accountable over what has been described as one of the darkest days in the country's history.

Trump also ordered the attorney general to seek the dismissal of roughly 450 cases that are pending before judges stemming from the largest investigation in Justice Department history.

Casting the rioters as "patriots" and "hostages," Trump has claimed they were unfairly treated by the Justice Department, which also charged him with federal crimes in two cases he contends were politically motivated. Trump said the pardons will end "a grave national injustice that has been perpetrated upon the American people over the last four years" and begin "a process of national reconciliation."

The pardons were met with elation from Trump supporters and lawyers for the Jan. 6 defendants. Trump supporters gathered late Monday in the cold outside the Washington jail, where more than



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Donald Trump signs an executive order pardoning about 1,500 defendants charged in the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol in the Oval Office of the White House, on Monday.

a dozen defendants were being held before the pardons.

"We are deeply thankful for President Trump for his actions today," said James Lee Bright, an attorney who represented Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes, who was serving an 18-year prison sentence after being convicted of seditious conspiracy and other crimes.

It's unclear how quickly the defendants may be released from prison. An attorney for Enrique Tarrio, the former Proud Boys national chairman who was sentenced to 22 years in prison for seditious conspiracy, said he expected his client to be released from prison Monday night.

"This marks a pivotal moment in our client's life, and it symboliz-

es a turning point for our nation," attorney Nayib Hassan said in a statement. "We are optimistic for the future, as we now turn the page on this chapter, embracing new possibilities and opportunities."

Democrats slammed the move to extend the pardons to violent rioters, many of whose crimes were captured on camera and broadcast on live TV. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called it "an outrageous insult to our justice system and the heroes who suffered physical scars and emotional trauma as they protected the Capitol, the Congress and the Constitution."

"Donald Trump is ushering in a Golden Age for people that break the law and attempt to overthrow

the government," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said in an emailed statement.

Former Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone, who lost consciousness and suffered a heart attack after a rioter shocked him with a stun gun, appeared taken aback to learn from an Associated Press reporter that those who assaulted police officers are among the pardon recipients.

"This is what the American people voted for," he said. "How do you react to something like that?"

Fourteen defendants, including several convicted of seditious conspiracy, had their sentences commuted, while the rest of those found guilty of Jan. 6 crimes were granted "full, complete and unconditional" pardons.

Panama, familiar with US intervention, bristles at Trump remarks

By JUAN ZAMORANO
Associated Press

PANAMA CITY — President Donald Trump's insistence Monday that he wants to have the Panama Canal back under U.S. control fed nationalist sentiment and worry in Panama, home to the critical trade route and a country familiar with U.S. military intervention.

"American ships are being severely overcharged and not treated fairly in any way, shape or form, and that includes the United States Navy. And above all, China is operating the Panama Canal," Trump said Monday.

The canal's administrator, Ricaurte Vásquez, said this month that China is not in control of the canal and that all nations are treated equally under a neutrality treaty.

He said Chinese companies operating in the ports on either end of the canal were part of a Hong Kong consortium that won a bid-



MATIAS DELACROIX/AP

A cargo ship traverses the Agua Clara Locks of the Panama Canal in Colon, Panama, on Sept. 2.

ding process in 1997. He added that U.S. and Taiwanese companies operate other ports along the canal as well.

In the streets of the capital, some Panamanians saw Trump's remarks as a way of applying pressure on Panama for something else he wants: better control

of migration through the Darien Gap. Others recalled the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama with concern.

Panama President José Raúl Mulino responded forcefully Monday, as he did after Trump's initial statement last month that the U.S. should consider repossessing the canal, saying the canal

belongs to his country of 4 million and will remain Panama's territory.

Luis Barrera, a 52-year-old cab driver, said Panama had fought hard to get the canal back and has expanded it since taking control.

"I really feel uncomfortable because it's like when you're big and you take a candy from a little kid," Barrera said.

At a rally in Phoenix in December, Trump said he might try to get the canal back after it was "foolishly" ceded to Panama. He complained that shippers were overcharged and that China had taken control of the key shortcut between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

Earlier this month, Trump wouldn't rule out using military force to take it back.

The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington

relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

The canal is a point of pride for Panamanians. On Dec. 31, they celebrated the 25th anniversary of the handover, and days later they commemorated the deaths of 21 Panamanians who died at the hands of the U.S. military decades earlier.

On Jan. 9, 1964, students protested in the then-U.S. controlled canal zone over not being allowed to fly Panama's flag at a secondary school there. The protests expanded to general opposition to the U.S. presence in Panama and U.S. troops got involved. A group of protesters this year burned an effigy of Trump.

Omayra Avendaño, who works in real estate, said Trump's threat should be taken seriously.

"We should be worried," she said. "We don't have an army and he's said he would use force."

NATION

Trump vows revolution in executive actions

BY STEPHANIE LAI,
SKYLAR WOODHOUSE
AND HADRIANA LOWENKRON
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump wasted no time announcing steps to implement many of his campaign pledges, including on immigration, energy, the military and federal workforce, casting many as reversing the policies of his predecessor, Joe Biden.

“We will immediately restore the integrity, competency and loyalty of America’s government,” Trump said in his inaugural address Monday. “With these actions, we will begin the complete restoration of America, and the revolution of common sense.”

Those actions included ordering the attorney general not to take action against TikTok for 75 days; pardoning nearly all people with criminal charges related to storming the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021; rescinding 78 Biden-era orders — including those related to diversity, immigration and climate — and withdrawing the U.S. again from the Paris Agreement. It’s expected that many of the orders Trump signs Monday will be challenged in court.

Most notable, however, was the absence of any explicit order on tariffs, especially China. But Trump did say Monday evening that he may impose duties on Mexico and Canada by Feb. 1 and was still considering universal tariffs on all imports, though not immediately.

While Trump continued signing more orders Monday night in Washington, here’s a brief run-down of what we know so far his administration plans to initiate, taken from his speech, public information about the orders, briefings by incoming officials and public statements.

Trade and economy

■ **TikTok:** Trump temporarily halted a ban on TikTok in the U.S., granting the company and its Chinese parent ByteDance Ltd. more time to reach a deal for the popular app that would resolve long-standing U.S. national security concerns.

The move gives the video-sharing platform a 75-day reprieve.

■ **Tariffs:** Trump will call for federal agencies to study tariff policies and the U.S. trade relationship with China, Canada and Mexico, according to incoming officials.

“I will immediately begin the overhaul of our trade system to protect American workers and families,” he said.

Trump also said he plans to enact tariffs of as much as 25% on Mexico and Canada by Feb. 1.

■ **‘External Revenue Service’:** Trump said he will establish an



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House, on Monday.

External Revenue Service to collect tariffs, adding “it will be massive amounts of money pouring into our Treasury coming from foreign sources.”

“Instead of taxing our citizens to enrich other countries, we will tariff and tax foreign countries to enrich our citizens,” he said.

■ **Inflation Emergency:** Trump directed departments and agencies “to deliver emergency price relief,” including the cost and supply of housing, lowering health care expenses and eliminate climate policies that drive up energy prices.

Pardons

The first executive order Trump signed in the Oval Office was the full pardon of about 1,500 people for their role in the siege of the U.S. Capitol. It also commuted the sentences of 14 people.

“We won, but now the work begins, we have to bring them home,” he said earlier in the evening.

Immigration

Trump signed a series of orders that signal a dramatic change to immigration policy and will usher in new limits to both legal and illegal immigration.

■ **Border Emergency:** Trump declared a national emergency at the southern border. The White House said in a statement that he will deploy armed forces, including the National Guard, to “engage in border security.”

“I will send troops to the southern border to repel the disastrous

invasion of our country,” Trump said.

Trump also wants the completion of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, an effort begun in his first term.

■ **Deportations:** Trump in his speech said the government “will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places from which they came.”

He’s expected to offer new authorities to Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection officers to carry out deportations.

■ **Birthright Citizenship:** The new president signed an order seeking to end automatic birthright citizenship for children of people not in the country legally.

“We’re the only country in the world that does this with birth right, as you know and it’s just absolutely ridiculous,” Trump said in the Oval Office. “We think we have very good grounds” for the change, he said.

■ **Asylum, Refugees:** Trump plans to suspend refugee resettlement for six months and will end “catch and release,” the policy by which migrants are released while awaiting hearings on their asylum status.

He signed a proclamation to end the asylum process, which officials say would allow the immediate removal of those in the country already awaiting court hearings.

The administration will also look to reinstate the “Remain in Mexico” policy, which requires

those seeking asylum to stay in Mexico before their U.S. immigration court date.

■ **Death Penalty:** The White House said the Department of Justice will seek the death penalty for “illegal immigrants who maim and murder Americans.”

■ **Cartels:** Trump moved to designate the gangs MS-13 and Tren de Aragua as foreign terrorist organizations, as well as Mexican cartels responsible for smuggling drugs across the border. He’ll use the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to deport members.

Energy and climate

Similar to his actions on immigration, Trump invokes emergency powers in a bid to boost domestic energy production and undo Biden-era policies designed to fight climate change.

A White House summary of plans said that Trump “will unleash American energy by ending Biden’s policies of climate extremism, streamlining permitting” and reviewing for possible reversal “all regulations that impose undue burdens on energy production and use, including mining and processing of non-fuel minerals.”

■ **Offshore Drilling, SPR:** Trump plans to open up more areas to oil and gas exploration, including offshore and in Alaska. “We will drill, baby, drill,” he said in his speech.

Trump also said he plans to refill the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve “right to the top” and “export American energy, all over the world.”

■ **Efficiency Efforts:** Trump plans to unwind several rules intended to boost efficiency, including those governing shower heads, toilets, washing machines, light bulbs and dishwashers.

■ **Wind Farms:** The administration will end leasing areas for “massive” wind farms that the White House said “degrade our natural landscapes and fail to serve American energy consumers.”

■ **Electric Vehicle Mandate:** Trump signed an order to eliminate what he’s called the “electric vehicle mandate” in part by terminating subsidies for the vehicles and terminating state emissions waivers “that function to limit sales of gasoline-powered automobiles.”

■ **Paris Agreement:** As he did in his first term, Trump will again withdraw the U.S. from the 2015 Paris Agreement. It isn’t expected to be immediate, however: Signatories must provide formal notice to the United Nations to initiate a withdrawal, then wait a year for it to take effect.

Gender and culture

■ **Only Two Sexes:** Trump said it will become “the official policy”

of the U.S. that there are only sexes, male and female, requiring agencies to give force to the definitions and terms in the order when applying statutes and regulations. The White House called the move “biological reality” and will “protect women from radical gender ideology.”

The order mandates that agencies will use the term sex, not gender, and would have the secretaries of State, Homeland Security and other agencies ensure that official documents, including passports and visas, reflect sex accurately.

■ **DEI in Federal Government and Military:** As promised on the campaign trail, Trump signed an order to stop diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in the federal government instituted under Biden.

“I will also end the government policy of trying to socially engineer, race and gender into every aspect of public and private life,” he said.

As for the military, Trump said he intends to issue an order “to stop our warriors from being subjected to radical political theories and social experiments while on duty.”

National security

■ **Reinstating Vaccine Objectors:** As he has pledged before, Trump said he will reinstate, with full back pay, any service members who were expelled from the military for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccination.

WHO

Trump signed an order withdrawing from the World Health Organization.

Federal workforce

■ **Return to Office:** Trump ordered all department and agency chiefs in executive department to eliminate work-from-home options and return employees to in-person work “as soon as practicable.” The White House earlier in the day said only 6% of government employees “work in person.”

■ **Hiring Freeze:** The administration will freeze hiring for federal employees, except for the military or those related to immigration enforcement and national security. The White House said earlier in the day it intended to “end the onslaught of useless and overpaid DEI activists buried into the federal workforce.”

■ **Regulatory Freeze:** Trump also ordered all agencies to pause issuing or publishing any new regulations until after they’re reviewed by the incoming administration, or designate that review “to any other person so appointed or designated by the President, consistent with applicable law.”

NATION



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/The Washington Post

Former President Joe Biden and former first lady Jill Biden wave as they depart after delivering remarks at a farewell event at Joint Base Andrews, Md.

Biden leaves DC after 50 years but says, 'We're not leaving the fight'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden on Monday wrapped up a more than 50-year political career, but promised that “we’re not leaving the fight,” as he bid farewell to the presidency and flew to California to unwind with his family and ease back into private life.

Biden spoke not long after watching his successor, Republican President Donald Trump, pledge during his inaugural address to “completely and totally reverse” everything that his Democratic predecessor did.

In the final hours before the noon-time transfer of executive power, Biden extended courtesies to the man he had turned out of the Oval Office four years ago. Trump denied losing the 2020 election and refused to offer similar niceties to Biden upon his inauguration in 2021.

The bitter cold day opened with Biden and his wife, Jill, receiving Trump, and his wife, Melania, for a traditional Inauguration Day meet-and-greet over tea at the White

House.

“Welcome home,” Biden told Trump.

Afterward, the rivals who share a history of political animosity rode in a limousine to the Capitol where Trump was sworn in as the 47th president.

“Our recent election is a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal,” Trump said about the work of the Biden administration. Biden sat expressionless in the front row.

As Trump gave his address, the residence staff at the White House got to work clearing out the remainder of Biden’s belongings so they could move Trump and his family back in. The work of turning over the White House includes redecorating the Oval Office.

Walls in the press offices that were bare in the morning after most of the staff had ended their government service were decorated by midafternoon with fresh photographs of Trump.

After Trump’s address, the new president and his wife walked the

Bidens outside to a Marine helicopter that had been waiting on the Capitol grounds to fly them to Joint Base Andrews, Md., for a farewell event with his staff.

“We couldn’t have done anything we did without you,” Biden told them. “No president gets to choose the moment they enter history, but they get to choose the team they enter history with and we chose the best damn team in the world.”

Even though they may feel “knocked down” by the turn of events, he said what was important was how quickly they get back up.

“We’re leaving office. We’re not leaving the fight,” Biden said, urging them to stay engaged.

And he appeared to joke about Trump’s speech, chuckling as he said, “we heard the inaugural address today. We got a lot more to do.” Biden then made the sign of the cross and everyone laughed.

He and the first lady then walked across the tarmac to the familiar blue-and-white Air Force plane he flew on as president for the flight to Santa Ynez, Calif.

Coast Guard head fired for failures, DHS official says

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant of the Coast Guard, was fired from the service’s top job because of her leadership deficiencies, operational failures and her handling of the service’s recent sexual-assault scandal, according to a senior official in the Department of Homeland Security.

Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Benjamine Huffman relieved her of command and announced the change in a message to the service Tuesday.

“She served a long and illustrious career, and I thank her for her service to our nation,” according to the message. Adm. Kevin E. Lunday is now the acting commandant. He was previously the vice commandant.

But a senior department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Fagan was fired because she failed to address border security and meet recruiting and retention goals, mismanaged acquisitions and lost trust with the force in her handling of the cover-up of a sexual assault scandal at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

“The failure to adequately address the systemic issues exposed by this investigation has underscored a leadership culture unwilling to ensure accountability and transparency in protecting service members,” the official said.

The investigation, known as Operation Fouled Anchor, was an internal review of sexual assault and harassment cases that occurred between 1990 and 2006 at the academy. As part of Fouled Anchor, the Coast Guard Investigative Service reviewed 102 reports of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment at the academy and identified 63 potential victims.

Investigators finalized the report

on Jan. 31, 2020, which found the academy knew of accusations against 30 of 43 people but only five were reported to criminal investigators. It concluded academy leaders failed to take sufficient action to ensure a safe environment for cadets,

yet no one was held accountable. Congress only found out about Fouled Anchor in June 2023 as reporters at CNN learned of its existence and began reporting about it.



Fagan

Retired Adm. Karl Schultz, who served as commandant until June 2022 when Fagan took over, made the decision to bury the Operation Fouled Anchor report, according to a House investigation of the cover-up.

The service also has been plagued with ballooning costs and delays on the acquisition of a new ice breaker. The Coast Guard in November hired a commercial ice breaker to serve in the Arctic region while the service waits for its own.

Fagan also “excessively focused” on initiatives meant to improve the diversity and equity among Coast Guard members and at the academy, the official said. President Donald Trump signed an executive order Monday — the first day of his second term in the White House — to terminate all diversity programs in federal government.

Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., said Fagan’s firing was an abuse of power and she had an “outstanding record.”

“Following her predecessor’s cover up of Operation Fouled Anchor, Adm. Fagan provided a fundamental change in Coast Guard leadership and has led the service with transparency and honesty to rebuild trust,” said Courtney, whose district includes the Coast Guard Academy.

Mexico defends sovereignty as US seeks to label cartels as terrorists

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum said Tuesday that President Donald Trump’s executive order moving toward designating drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations would only impact Mexico if there’s close coordination between the two governments.

She said that Mexico would defend its sovereignty and independence while seeking coordination

with the U.S. in the wake of the order signed Monday.

“We all want to fight the drug cartels,” Sheinbaum said at her daily press briefing. The U.S. “in their territory, us in our territory.”

Trump’s order highlighted Mexican drug cartels and other Latin American criminal groups like Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua and Salvadoran gang Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). The order says they “threaten the safety of the Ameri-

can people, the security of the United States, and the stability of the international order in the Western Hemisphere.”

The order did not list any Mexican cartels by name but said Cabinet secretaries would recommend groups for designation as terrorist organizations in the next 14 days. It was among a slew of executive orders Trump signed Monday to kick off his administration, several of which focus on securing the south-

ern border.

“The Cartels have engaged in a campaign of violence and terror throughout the Western Hemisphere that has not only destabilized countries with significant importance for our national interests but also flooded the United States with deadly drugs, violent criminals, and vicious gangs,” the order reads.

It was unclear what the impact could be for fighting the cartels, but there was concern it could be another

way to make it more difficult for people from the countries where those groups operate to access the U.S.

In came in addition to measures including the declaration of an emergency on the U.S. southern border, a promise to slap 25% tariffs on Mexico and Canada on Feb. 1 and ending the use of the CBP One app, which allowed migrants to apply for asylum appointments before reaching the border.

NATION

Storm brings snow to Texas, Gulf Coast

By SARAH BRUMFIELD
Associated Press

A rare winter storm charged through Texas and the northern Gulf Coast on Tuesday, blanketing New Orleans and Houston with snow, closing highways, grounding nearly all flights and canceling school for millions of students more used to hurricane dismissals than snow days.

The storm prompted the first ever blizzard warnings for several coastal counties near the Texas-Louisiana border, and snow plows were at the ready in the Florida Panhandle. Heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain are expected around the Deep South as a blast of Arctic air plunges much of the Midwest and the eastern U.S. into a deep freeze.

Nearly 2,000 flights from or within the U.S. were canceled Tuesday with about 10,000 more flights delayed, according to online tracker FlightAware.com. In Texas, both Houston airports suspended flight operations starting Tuesday in expectation of hazardous conditions.

Winter storm warnings extended from Texas to North Carolina on Tuesday, with heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain expected to move eastward through the region into Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a state of emergency was declared Monday night

across at least a dozen counties in New York as heavy lake-effect snow was expected around Lake Ontario and Lake Erie through Wednesday — with 1 to 2 feet possible — along with extreme cold temperatures.

Ahead of the storm, governors in Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, declared states of emergency and many school systems canceled classes Tuesday.

The blizzard warning in effect until midday Tuesday was the first issued by the office in Lake Charles, La., according to meteorologist Donald Jones. Strong winds with heavier snow bands were reducing visibility, and areas across the Gulf South that rarely see snow are expecting near-record or record snowfall, Jones said.

“The last time we saw snow of this magnitude was way back in 1960, and prior to that, the previous snowfall record that even stands to this day was way back in 1895,” Jones said. “By modern standards this is going to be a historic and very memorable storm for this part of the world.”

Snowfall rates of 1 inch per hour or more were possible from eastern Texas to western Florida, and historic snowfall of 3 to 6 inches was forecast along the Interstate 10 corridor including Houston; New Orleans; Mobile, Ala.; and



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

People take a walk in a neighborhood on Tuesday in Houston.

Pensacola, Fla., according to the National Weather Service.

Heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain was expected across Georgia, northern Florida and the eastern Carolinas from Tuesday night into Wednesday.

Much of the Eastern Seaboard is enduring some of the coldest temperatures this winter. Frigid temperatures persisted across the eastern two-thirds of the country with multiple record lows possible

through midweek, especially across the Gulf Coast and portions of the Southeast, the weather service said. Normal temperatures were only expected to return slowly by the end of the week.

Forecasters warned the sub-freezing morning lows could threaten sensitive vegetation and exposed plumbing in areas unaccustomed to bitter cold.

Wind chills were expected to reach minus 30 degrees to minus

50 at times across portions of the Dakotas and into the Upper Midwest, posing an extreme risk of hypothermia and frostbite.

The extreme cold prompted school districts across the upper Midwest to close schools Tuesday, so students wouldn't have to endure the severe wind chills.

This latest cold snap comes from a disruption in the polar vortex, the ring of cold air usually trapped about the North Pole.

Dangerous winds, wildfires return to Southern California

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Dangerous winds returned to Southern California on Tuesday as firefighters battled new fires amid dry conditions, and a pair of major blazes burned for a third week in the Los Angeles area.

Forecasters warned that gusts could peak at 70 mph along the coast and 100 mph in the mountains and foothills during extreme fire weather that was expected to last through Tuesday morning. Wind speeds ranged from 35 mph along the coast to 63 mph at elevation overnight, according to the National Weather Service.

The weather service warned of a “particularly dangerous situation” in Los Angeles, Ventura and San Diego counties due to low humidity and damaging Santa Ana winds.

“The conditions are ripe for explosive fire growth should a fire start,” said Andrew Rorke, a meteorologist with the weather service in Oxnard.

Evacuation orders were issued for the Lilac Fire, which had burned at least 80 acres of dry brush and was threatening structures in the Bonsall area early Tuesday, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protec-



JAE C. HONG/AP

Firefighters battle the Lilac Fire in Bonsall, Calif., Tuesday.

tion said. Meanwhile, crews stopped the forward progress of the nearby Pala Fire, the agency said.

On Monday, Los Angeles firefighters quickly extinguished a small brush fire near the iconic triple-domed Griffith Observatory in a park overlooking the city. A

man suspected of starting the fire was taken into custody, said David Cuellar, a Los Angeles Police Department spokesperson. Firefighters also quickly extinguished a brush fire along Interstate 405 in the LA neighborhood of Granada Hills that temporarily closed the northbound lanes.

Trump, who criticized the response to the wildfires during his inaugural address, has said he will travel to Los Angeles on Friday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday said the devastation left by the blazes underscores the need for partnership between the state and federal governments.

“I look forward to President Trump’s visit to Los Angeles and his mobilization of the full weight of the federal government to help our fellow Americans recover and rebuild,” Newsom said.

A small amount of rain is forecast for the weekend in the Los Angeles area, though more gusty winds are expected to return Thursday, Rorke said.

The low humidity, bone-dry vegetation and strong Santa Ana winds come as firefighters continue battling the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have killed at least 27 people and destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out on Jan. 7. The Palisades fire was 61% contained early Tuesday and the Eaton fire 87% contained, according to fire officials.

More evacuation orders were lifted Monday for Pacific Palisades. Authorities said only residents would be allowed back in af-

ter showing proof of residency at a checkpoint. Over the weekend, two men impersonating firefighters attempted to enter an evacuation zone for the Palisades Fire, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department.

LA Mayor Karen Bass said Monday the city was prepared for any possible new fires and warned the winds could disperse ash from existing fire zones across Southern California. She urged Angelenos to visit lacity.gov to learn about ways to protect themselves from toxic air during Santa Ana winds.

Cal Fire and local fire departments have positioned fire engines, water-dropping aircraft and hand crews across multiple counties to enable a quick response should a new fire break out, Acuna said.

Los Angeles city fire officials said the department has all available engines ready and that 30 of them had been positioned in high-risk areas.

The agency ordered the outgoing shift of about 1,000 firefighters to remain on duty to staff the extra engines.

“The pre-deployment is very, very thoughtful and strategic,” LA Fire Chief Kristin Crowley said.

WORLD

Taliban say two Americans freed in prisoner exchange

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD—A prisoner swap between the United States and Afghanistan’s Taliban freed two Americans in exchange for a Taliban figure imprisoned for life in California on drug trafficking and terrorism charges, officials said Tuesday.

The deal came as Joe Biden, who oversaw the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, handed power over to returning President Donald Trump. The Taliban praised the swap as a step toward the “normalization” of ties between the U.S. and Afghanistan, but that likely remains a tall order as most countries in the world still don’t recognize their rule and another two Americans are believed held.

The Taliban’s Foreign Ministry in Kabul confirmed the swap, saying two U.S. citizens had been exchanged for Khan Mohammed, 55, who was sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment in 2008.

The family of Ryan Corbett, one American held by the Taliban, con-



ANNA CORBETT/AP

This family photo shows Ryan Corbett, his daughter Miriam and son Caleb in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2020. Ryan Corbett has been freed after more than two years of detention by the Taliban, his family said.

firmed he had been released in a statement. Corbett, who had lived in Afghanistan with his family at the time of the 2021 collapse of the U.S.-backed government, was detained by the Taliban in August 2022 while on a business trip.

Both CNN and The New York

Times, relying on anonymous U.S. officials, identified the second American released as William McKenty, though no other details have emerged about what he was doing in Afghanistan. Officials in Washington did not respond to requests for comment early Tuesday.

Dozens killed in fire at ski resort in Turkey

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — A fire at a 12-story hotel at a popular ski resort in northwestern Turkey on Tuesday killed at least 66 people, Turkey’s Interior Minister said.

Ali Yerlikaya said at least 51 other people were injured in the disaster that struck the Grand Kartal hotel in the resort of Kartalkaya, in Bolu province’s Koroglu mountains, some 185 miles east of Istanbul. The fire occurred during the schools’ semester break, when hotels in the region are packed.

“We are in deep pain. We have unfortunately lost 66 lives in the fire that broke out at this hotel,” Yerlikaya told reporters after inspecting the site.

Health Minister Kemal Memisoglu said at least one of the injured was in serious condition, while 17 other people had been discharged after being treated.

The hotel had 238 registered guests, Yerlikaya said. The fire was reported at 3:27 a.m. and the fire department began to respond at 4:15 a.m., he told reporters.

The government appointed six prosecutors to lead an investigation into the blaze, which is believed to

have started in the hotel’s restaurant section.

At least two of the victims died after jumping from the building in a panic, Gov. Abdulaziz Aydin told the state-run Anadolu Agency earlier. Private NTV television and other media reported that some people tried to climb down from their rooms using sheets and blankets.

Necmi Kepcetutan, a ski instructor at the hotel, said he was asleep when the fire erupted and he rushed out of the building. He told NTV television that he then helped some 20 guests out of the hotel.

The hotel was engulfed in smoke, making it difficult for guests to locate the fire escape, he said.

Witnesses and reports suggested that the hotel’s fire detection system failed to operate.

“My wife smelled the burning. The alarm did not go off,” Atakan Yelkovan, a guest staying on the third floor, told the IHA news agency.

“We tried to go upstairs but couldn’t, there were flames. We went downstairs and came here (outside),” he said.

Yelkovan said it took about an hour for firefighters to arrive.

China’s population falls for a 3rd straight year, posing myriad challenges

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan—China’s population fell last year for the third straight year, its government said Friday, pointing to further demographic challenges for the world’s second most populous nation, which is now facing both an aging

population and an emerging shortage of working age people.

China’s population stood at 1.408 billion at the end of 2024, a decline of 1.39 million from the previous year.

The figures announced by the government in Beijing follow trends worldwide, but especially in

East Asia, where Japan, South Korea and other nations have seen their birth rates plummet. China three years ago joined Japan and most of Eastern Europe among other nations whose population is falling.

The reasons are in many cases

similar: Rising costs of living are causing young people to put off or rule out marriage and childbirth while pursuing higher education and careers. While people are living longer, that’s not enough to keep up with rate of new births.

Countries such as China that al-

low very little immigration are especially at risk.

More than one-fifth of the population is aged 60 or over, with the official figure given as 310.3 million or 22% of the total population. By 2035, this number is forecast to exceed 30%

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Animals evacuated amid wildfires in California

TX FORT WORTH — Two cargo planes landed on the Texas Jet tarmac in Fort Worth packed with four-legged evacuees from Southern California. The 161 dogs and 15 cats inside had been through multiple disasters.

The animals were already long-time residents of Los Angeles city shelters, which were so overcrowded last year that some dogs had been forced to live in crates in hallways. Then came the Jan. 7 wildfires.

The ongoing fires that have killed at least 27 people and displaced thousands also sent hundreds of pets into shelters — some that had gotten lost among the chaos and others dropped off for temporary care while their owners evacuated.

Welfare groups in California like Paws for Life K9 Rescue rushed to pull shelter long timers, including these 176 animals, in order to make room for pets waiting to be reunited with their families after the fires.

Man to serve life in prison for kidnappings

OR PORTLAND — An Oregon man has been sentenced to life in federal prison after being convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting two women in separate instances, including locking one in a cinder block cell.

Negasi Zuberi, 31, was sentenced in federal court in Medford, Portland television station KGW reported. A federal jury convicted him in October on charges of kidnapping, transportation for criminal sexual activity, being a felon in possession of a weapon and attempting to break out of jail when he tried to smash through his cell window in August 2023.

In July 2023, Zuberi solicited a woman to engage in prostitution in Seattle, authorities said.

He told the woman he was an undercover officer, showed her a badge, pointed a Taser at her and placed her in handcuffs and leg irons before putting her in the back of his vehicle.

He then drove hundreds of miles to his home in Klamath Falls, Ore., and locked the woman in a cinder block cell in his garage, according to the FBI.

After the woman escaped after repeatedly banging on the cell door until it broke open, Zuberi fled and was arrested in Reno, Nev.

Lawmaker's death leaves chamber deadlocked

PA HARRISBURG — A Democrat in Pennsylvania's House of Representatives has died, the House Democratic caucus said Sunday night, leaving the chamber deadlocked at a 101-



MARK VANCE/LEAVE/AP

Interacting with art

Interactive art installations welcome visitors Saturday on the first day of the annual Art Shanty Projects on Lake Harriet in Minneapolis, Minn.

101 partisan divide.

Rep. Matt Gergely, D-Allegheeny, died Sunday. He was 45, House Democrats said.

Neither House Democrats or Gergely's family disclosed a cause, although they said two weeks ago that he had suffered a "medical emergency over the holidays requiring hospitalization" in the days before the chamber convened its two-year session earlier this month.

House Democrats won a one-seat margin in November's election, the same one-seat margin that Democrats had maintained in the last legislative session.

Gergely's death means the chamber will be tied at 101-101 until a special election is held to fill the seat in the heavily Democratic Pittsburgh-area district.

Members of MS-13 gang plead guilty in 9 killings

NY NEW YORK — Three high-ranking members of the MS-13 street gang have pleaded guilty to their roles in nine killings involving machetes and guns in the New York City suburbs, federal prosecutors said.

Kevin Torres pleaded guilty Friday in federal court in Central Islip to racketeering charges for his role in the killings, which took place during a violent period for the transnational gang in New York from 2016 to 2017.

The 29-year-old Freeport resident was the New York regional leader of the Sailors Locos Salvatruchas Westside, a Long Island-based clique of MS-13, according to the U.S. Attorney's office for the Eastern District of New York.

David Sosa-Guevara, 33, and Victor Lopez-Morales, 36, both of Roosevelt, entered guilty pleas in Central Islip court.

Prosecutors say Sosa-Guevara was the New York leader of the Hollywood Locos Salvatruchas, another MS-13 clique that operated on Long Island, and Lopez-Morales had been a high-ranking member.

Customer's pet monkey attacks drive-thru worker

AL MOBILE — A Starbucks employee was attacked by a customer's pet monkey, Alabama police say.

The incident happened on Jan. 10, the Mobile Police Department said in a Jan. 19 email. The animal and its owner were gone by the time officers arrived, but investigators pieced together what happened.

The employee was working the drive-thru when a monkey inside a customer's vehicle got free, police said.

"The monkey then leapt from the vehicle, through the window of the business, and attacked an employee," according to police.

A co-worker rushed to help and pulled the monkey off of the employee.

"The monkey then reentered the customer's vehicle before the customer drove away," police said.

Offshore wind project Biden visited is no more

MA BOSTON — A \$300 million offshore wind cable plant development project in Somerset that President Biden visited in July 2022, ushering in the country's transition to clean energy, is off the table after its Italian developer walked away from it.

The Prysmian Group backed out of its nearly three-year endeavor of gaining necessary local and state permits days before President Donald Trump retook office, saying it wouldn't purchase the land needed for the effort.

"Prysmian is continuously evaluating market opportunities for our capacity to be aligned with demand," the company said in a statement, "to best serve our customers' needs and to also carry out efficient and timely investments."

"As a result of the consideration, including the strong growth opportunities in the U.S. and global cable markets," the company added, "Prysmian has decided to not proceed with the purchase of the land in Somerset."

Local officials and offshore wind advocates expressed concern and sadness around the development as critics welcomed the news.

Bird flu discovered in a commercial poultry flock

GA ATLANTA — For the first time since the 2022 nationwide outbreak, bird flu hit a poultry producer in Georgia, the nation's top state for chicken production.

The state Department of Agriculture announced Friday that the agency has detected a case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza at a commercial poultry producer in Elbert County, approximately 100 miles northeast of Atlanta. The agency suspended all poultry exhibitions, shows, swaps, meets and sales.

The virus has been detected four times in Georgia, but only in backyard flocks previously, including among 13 chickens and ducks earlier this month in Clayton County south of Atlanta.

"This is a serious threat to Georgia's #1 industry and the livelihoods of thousands of Georgians who make their living in our state's poultry industry," Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper said in a news release.

FACES



UNIVERSAL PICTURES, DREAMWORKS ANIMATION/TNS

Lupita Nyong'o voices Roz, a highly advanced robot who must adapt to live on an island inhabited only animals, in "The Wild Robot."

New this week: 'The Wild Robot,' 'The Night Agent,' a new 'Watson'

Associated Press

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

■ The animated charmer "The Wild Robot" begins streaming on Peacock on Friday. Writer-director Chris Sanders adapted Peter Brown's middle grade novel about a smart robot (voiced by Lupita Nyong'o) who gets stranded in the wild, and becomes caretaker for a young gosling. In his review for the Associated Press, Mark Kennedy wrote that it is an "absolute movie triumph, a soulful sweet-sad animated journey that may have your kids asking why you're tearing up so much." He also noted the striking visuals, "a textured world that is almost painterly. You can see snowflakes settle on mottled fur, moss on rocks, individual leaves in a den." It's a shoo-in for an Oscar nomination.

■ Zoë Kravitz's directorial debut, "Blink Twice," began streaming free for Prime Video subscribers Tuesday. Channing Tatum plays a tech mogul who flies cocktail waitress Friday (Naomi Ackie) out to a private island where strange things start happening. The AP's Jocelyn Noveck called it a "stylish, ambitious, buzzy film that seems to aspire to be a gender-themed 'Get Out,' or a #MeToo-era thriller with echoes of 'Promising Young Woman.'" Kravitz, she added, "almost pulls it off."

■ Julia Louis-Dreyfus plays a New York writer who accidentally overhears her loving husband's (Tobias Menzies) brutally honest assessment of her new book in "You Hurt My

Feelings," which comes to Netflix on Sunday. It's one of several comedic dramas that play out in the film, written and directed by Nicole Holofcener, which co-stars Michaela Watkins as her sister, Jeannie Berlin as her mother and Arian Moayed of "Succession" as her brother-in-law. In his review, AP Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote that, "for Holofcener, something as commonplace as little white lies between a married couple is just as fertile territory as, say, time travel is to Christopher Nolan. To her, such a minefield of insecurity is a playground. And in "You Hurt My Feelings," it's glorious — albeit in a profoundly awkward way that can be mortifying — to watch her at play."

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

Music

■ Recent Grammy-nominee Jordan Adetunji is best known for the viral "Kehlani," an ode to the bright alt-R&B star. She later hopped on a remix, perhaps eclipsing the original but certainly putting the world on to Adetunji's charms, which weave hip-hop and hyperpop, R&B and Afrobeats. The Belfast, Northern Ireland-based artist's new mixtape, "A Jaguar's Dream," expands on the excitement. These are transformative songs about love and lust.

■ Rapper Central Cee has become a figurehead in the London scene that pulls from the Chicago-bred musical style, and, as Vogue put it, "may very well be the first British rapper in history to clock up more than one billion streams." He's landed features with 21 Savage, J Cole, Ice Spice and Lil Baby, delivering tight raps in his unmistakable accent. And on Friday, he will release his debut album, "Can't Rush Greatness" — just in time for the rest of

the world to get on board.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Television

■ The math doesn't add up in global conspiracy thriller "Prime Target," when strange things start happening to Cambridge university student Edward Brooks, played by "One Day"'s Leo Woodall. Quintessa Swindell's NSA agent soon calculates that something is wrong and together they go on the run in this Apple TV+ eight-episode mini-series from former math teacher Steve Thompson. "Prime Target" premieres on Wednesday on Apple TV+.

— Hilary Fox

■ "The Night Agent," based on a novel by Matthew Quirk, was a surprise hit when it debuted on Netflix in 2023. The story — about a young FBI agent (Gabriel Basso) who discovers there's a mole in the U.S. government — immediately captivated viewers. The show returns for its second season Thursday. Filming is underway for a third season, too.

— Alicia Rancilio

■ Two TV favorites get blended when "Watson" debuts on CBS on Sunday: A medical drama and Sherlock Holmes. Morris Chestnut stars in the modern-day procedural, which follows Dr. Watson after the death of his crime-solving partner as he shifts focus to medical mysteries. He is head of a clinic treating rare disorders so every week there is a new case along with the series-long fallout from Holmes' death. Fans of both "Sherlock" and "House" will say: "The game's afoot!"

— Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

Grammys again tap Noah as host

The Grammy Awards are sticking with their man: Trevor Noah will host the show for the fifth consecutive time, the Grammys announced Tuesday.

The comedian, best known for hosting Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" from 2015 to 2022, will once more be front and center Feb. 2, when the awards show is broadcast live from Crypto.com Arena in



Noah

Los Angeles on CBS. This year's telecast will also raise funds to support relief efforts after wildfires devastated the Grammys' hometown, the statement said.

Each of the past three telecasts has improved on the previous year's ratings, culminating in 2024, when 16.9 million Americans watched — the highest audience since the 2020 ceremony.

The only other people to host five or more Grammy telecasts were musical artists: Andy Williams hosted seven shows, followed by John Denver with six and LL Cool J with five.

In addition to host, Noah will be a producer — and a nominee. His "Where Was I" has a nod for best comedy album. Noah was nominated in the same category last year for "I Wish You Would," losing to Dave Chappelle.

Beyoncé goes into the night with the most nods. "Cowboy Carter" is up for album and country album of the year, and "Texas Hold 'Em" is nominated for record, song and country song of the year. Post Malone is just behind Beyoncé, with seven nominations, tied with Billie Eilish, Kendrick Lamar and Charli xcx, who earned her first nominations as a solo artist.

Other news

■ Garth Hudson, The Band's virtuoso keyboardist and all-around musician, has died. Hudson, the eldest and last survivor of the group that once backed Bob Dylan, was 87. A rustic man with an expansive forehead and sprawling beard, Hudson was a



Hudson

classically trained performer who played piano, synthesizers, horns and his favored Lowrey organ. No matter the song, Hudson summoned just the right feeling or shading, whether the tipsy clavi-net and wah-wah pedal on "Up On Cripple Creek" or the melancholy saxophone on "It Makes No Difference." Hudson's death was confirmed Tuesday by The Canadian Press.

From The Associated press

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Jacqueline Smith

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OPINION

Trump vowed to uphold the law. But not on TikTok?

BY JIM GERAGHTY

Special to The Washington Post

At noon on Monday, Donald Trump took an oath to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States” for the second time, just days after insisting that he could issue an executive order that would delay the implementation of a law that restricts TikTok — a law that passed the House 360-58 and passed the Senate 79-18, was signed by President Joe Biden, and was upheld by the Supreme Court with no dissents.

Not a great start!

Trump's inaugural address was a de facto rerun of his one hour and 32-minute convention speech last summer, the longest in American history. To listen to his inaugural speech, you might have thought that the top issues in the last presidential election were restoring President William McKinley's name to the mountain currently named Denali; the need to rename the “Gulf of Mexico” the “Gulf of America”; and the need to take back the Panama Canal. Trump also promised “our power will stop all wars.” It almost makes you yearn for the more modest days when presidents just promised to cure cancer.

You can choke on the irony of Trump declaring “as commander in chief, I have no higher responsibility than to defend our country from threats,” and “under my leadership, we will restore fair, equal, and impartial justice under the constitutional rule of law,” in light of his current stance on TikTok. Trump seems to believe that enforcement of the law (forcing the sale of the Chinese-owned social media platform to a U.S.

company or its closure in this country) can be put aside if he thinks he can negotiate a better deal. “I would like the United States to have a 50% ownership position in a joint venture,” Trump said on Truth Social. “By doing this, we save TikTok, keep it in good hands and allow it to stay up. Without U.S. approval, there is no Tik Tok.”

Trump waves away the broad bipartisan concern about the fact that TikTok turned people's smartphones into surveillance devices for a company, ByteDance, with ties to the Chinese Communist Party, and he acts as if the problem is that the U.S. government isn't getting its share of the revenue. He promised the company a 90-day extension after it briefly went offline over the weekend.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., who is indeed familiar with the Constitution, said on NBC News' “Meet the Press” on Sunday, “I think we will enforce the law. ... We don't have any confidence in ByteDance. They had 270 days, to be exact. The law is very precise. And the only way to extend that is if there is an actual deal in the works.”

ByteDance has repeatedly refused to sell the app; former GOP congressman from Wisconsin Mike Gallagher argues that this is evidence that the whole point of TikTok is as a spying and propaganda tool.

If ByteDance “were a normal market actor, they would have taken the tens of billions of dollars that any number of people are willing to offer them,” he said in a Sunday appearance on Fox News. The refusal to sell “proves they are not a normal market actor. This is a weapon in the hands of Xi Jinping designed to weaken America, and only

changing the ownership structure will fix that.”

Gallagher noted that the law was written with a clearly defined window of opportunity for a sale, and that window has now closed, with no wiggle room.

“As for an extension, there is no extension,” Gallagher said. “Let me tell you, as the person who wrote the bill, the extension was for within the 270-day window, which closed at 12:01 a.m. this morning,” Gallagher said. “And in order to get an extension, the president has to certify there are legally binding documents enabling the execution of a qualified divestiture, which of course, there isn't.”

At the Supreme Court on Jan. 10, Noel Francisco, representing TikTok, argued that any divestiture “would be exceedingly difficult under any timeframe. ... There's a global team of engineers that are some in China, some in Europe, some in the United States, that maintain and update the original source code. And, as we understand their interpretation, a qualified divestiture would prohibit any kind of coordination with that global team of engineers.”

There is no divestiture in the works, and ByteDance has repeatedly insisted it isn't interested in divestiture. Ergo, the ban must go into effect.

But Trump still sees laws as something that can be ignored when they inconvenience him.

Second verse, same as the first.

Jim Geraghty is National Review's senior political correspondent, where he writes the daily “Morning Jolt” newsletter, among other writing duties.

So much still to solve: Don't overreact to Gaza ceasefire

BY DANIEL DEPETRIS

Chicago Tribune

Whether you think Donald Trump or Joe Biden deserves the credit for pushing Israel and Hamas into a ceasefire deal is largely a sideshow to the main event. As the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board astutely observed last week, the most important thing is the substance — 15 months after the war in Gaza started, the parties were finally able to come to terms. On Friday, the Israeli security cabinet voted to advance the deal. The larger cabinet approved it early Saturday.

To the more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza who have lost their loved ones, homes and livelihoods, the announcement of a ceasefire was the best news they could have received. The same can be said for the families of the hostages in Israel, some of whom have already been reunited.

But this is only half the story. The other half still needs to be written, and it could go one of two ways — peace and rebuilding or a return to conflict. At the risk of throwing cold water on the proceedings, it must be said that while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas agreed to stop the war for six weeks, they still haven't agreed to stop the war permanently.

The agreement is structured in three stages. The first involves six weeks of quiet, a return of some hostages in exchange for Palestinian security prisoners, an Israeli military pullout from the Netzarim Corridor dividing Gaza, a gradual reduction of Israeli troops from the Philadelphi Corridor along the Egypt-Gaza border and a surge of humanitarian aid into

the enclave.

On the 16th day of Phase 1, Israeli and Hamas negotiators will return to the table to hammer out the contours of Phase 2, which includes a permanent end to the war, more prisoner and hostage releases, and a full Israeli troop withdrawal from the territory. If we get to Phase 3, Gaza will be subject to a massive reconstruction effort.

But the key word here is “if.” It's not a given that Phase 1 will lead to Phase 2. The elephant in the room that has killed negotiations time and again ever since Biden released his peace framework in May is still there: Israel and Hamas are diametrically opposed on whether the pause in hostilities should transition into a lasting end to the war. Nothing in the days since have those positions changed.

Hamas still wants a total and complete end to the conflict and won't release the last several dozen hostages until it gets that. As far as we can tell, Netanyahu still wants to resume the military campaign when Phase 1 is over.

We don't talk about Phase 3 much, but there are a bunch of unanswered questions there as well. The deal is clear on the fundamentals: Gaza will be flooded with an internationally backed reconstruction campaign. According to the United Nations, nearly 70% of Gaza's buildings have been damaged or destroyed. Reconstruction costs are estimated at \$18.5 billion. Simply clearing the 50 million tons of rubble might take up to 15 years.

The details about who will administer and finance this reconstruction plan, not to mention how Gaza will actually be governed after the war is over, is still a subject of intense negotiations by the major stakeholders. If the U.S.

had its way, the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority would invite international partners into Gaza to help run an interim administration, staffed by Palestinians from Gaza as well as PA officials. Over time, a reformed PA would control the territory in full. An interim security force made up of Arab states would take responsibility for policing the area and ensuring Hamas doesn't regenerate.

Israel and the Arab states, however, haven't fully bought into this plan. Netanyahu, for one, sees the PA as no better than Hamas and has repeatedly emphasized in public that he won't tolerate its return to Gaza. The U.S. would prefer the Arab states take the lead in postwar Gaza, yet the Gulf states with deep pockets — the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar — are unwilling to carry the load unless at least a concrete pathway to an independent Palestinian state is established. This, too, is a no-go for Netanyahu, whose entire political career has been prefaced on obstructing such a state.

And then there's Hamas, which will be around regardless of when the war ends. It has an incentive to spoil any plans Washington, Jerusalem and the Arab states come up with — assuming they can come up with anything.

The next few days and weeks will be the most joyful Israelis and Palestinians have felt in a very long time. But we shouldn't be under any misconceptions. This process is only just beginning and is certain to be full of complications. Whether it succeeds is still very much to be determined.

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

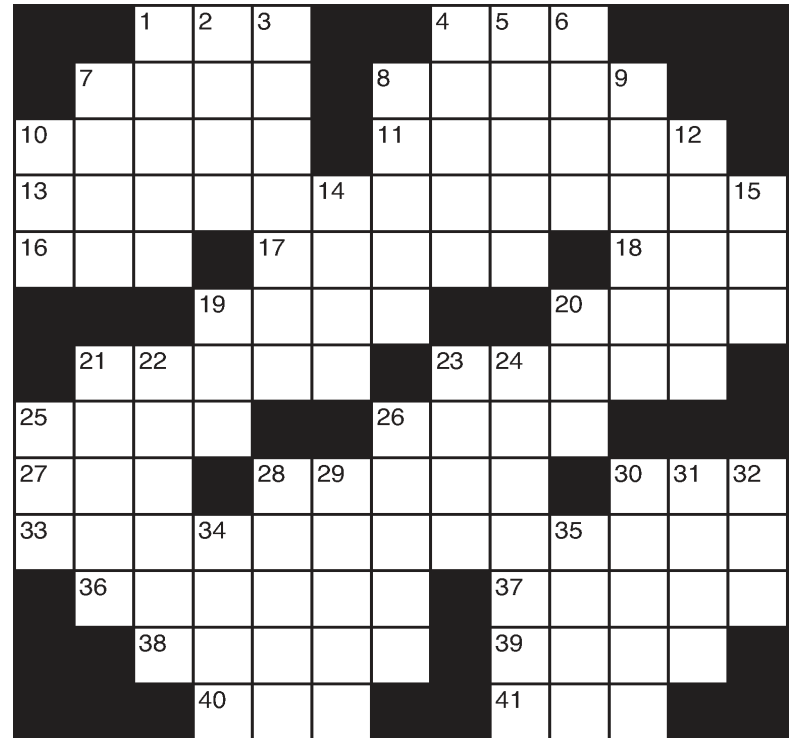
Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Center
- 4 Solo in space
- 7 Lawn mower brand
- 8 Spoils, with "on"
- 10 Wanderer
- 11 Beethoven's Third
- 13 Time management aids
- 16 Citric beverage
- 17 Got up
- 18 Mosquito barrier
- 19 "— chic!"
- 20 Feel sorry for
- 21 Mom's sister, informally
- 23 "Time in a Bottle" singer
- 25 Impudent
- 26 Owl call
- 27 Solid-rock insert
- 28 Spine-tingling
- 30 Lupino of film
- 33 Commuters' buys
- 36 Turned to mush
- 37 Lounges
- 38 Egypt's neighbor
- 39 Sloth's home

- 40 Ballpark fig.
- 41 Even so

- 15 Farm pen
- 19 Stick with a kick
- 20 Cauldron
- 21 Greek storyteller
- 22 Faraway orb
- 23 Business abbr.
- 24 Author's payment
- 25 Actress Dawber
- 26 "Papa" of classical music
- 28 Molts
- 29 Traction aid
- 30 Archipelago part
- 31 Editing mark
- 32 Ninny
- 34 Verifiable
- 35 Harboring a grudge

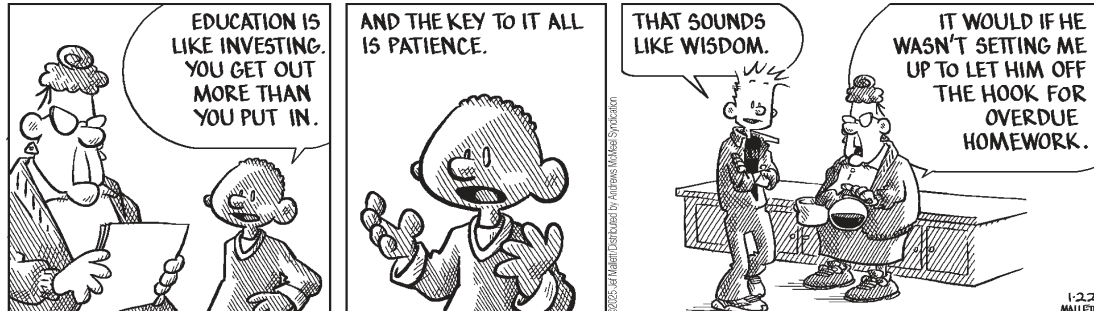
DOWN

- 1 Bro
- 2 Russian river
- 3 Tattoos, e.g.
- 4 Circle dances
- 5 Expiate
- 6 Dresden denial
- 7 Frog's kin
- 8 Apollo's birthplace
- 9 Picturesque
- 10 Secret-protecting doc.
- 12 Mountain crest
- 14 Quarry

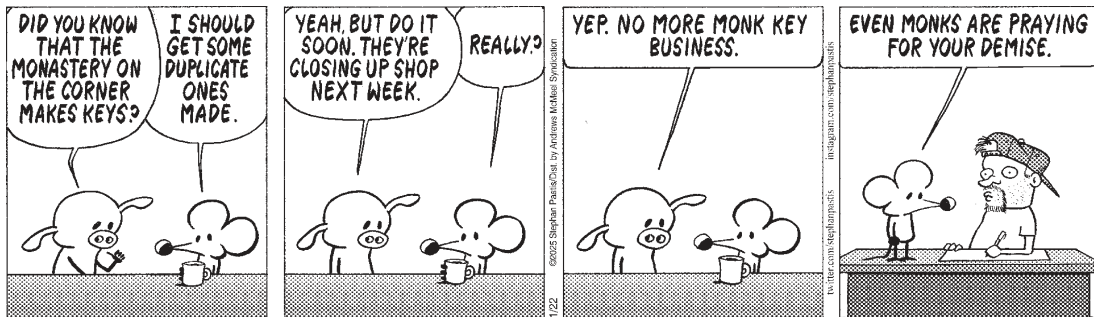
Answer to Previous Puzzle



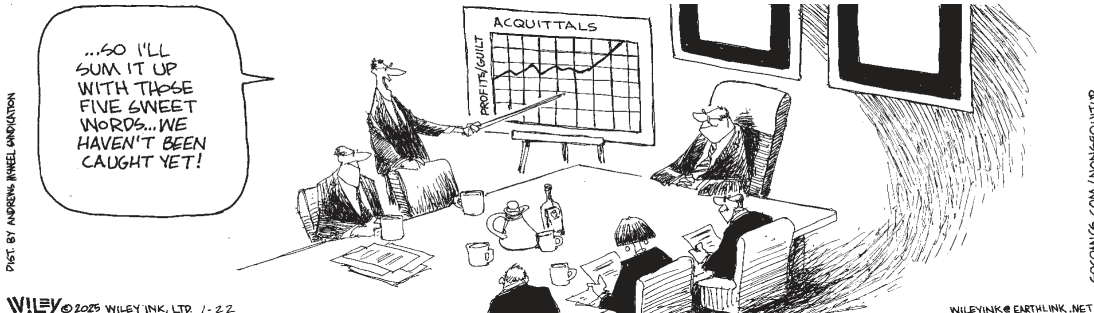
Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



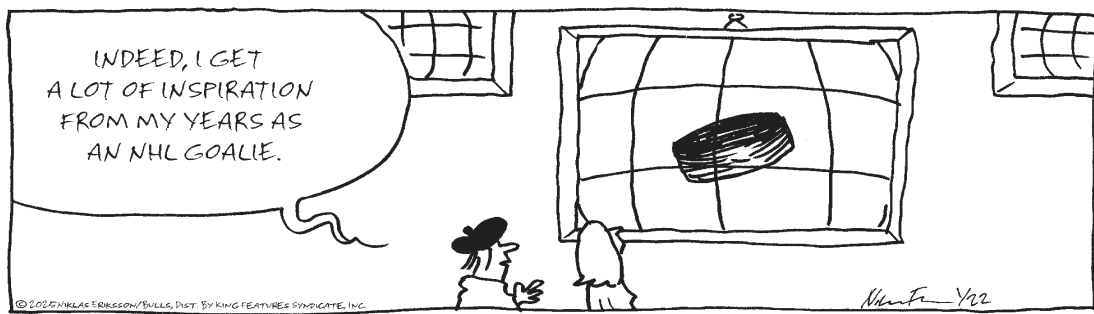
Non Sequitur



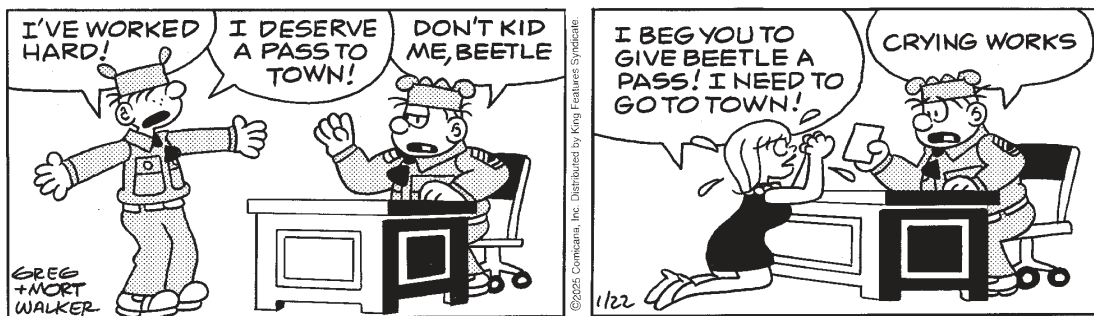
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



1-22

CRYPTOQUIP

R S D R C A N E Q A C W B A N Z E
 O Z B W L R E A Q A U M A D N M E N Q A M S
 U M Q D Z Q A R O Z E A U R N E A R C E R A :
 R L M E W R P ' Q R - L M E W M P Q .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A CONVERSATION DECLINES, FETCH A BIG ORANGE GOURD. THAT'LL GIVE THEM PUMPKIN TO TALK ABOUT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals E

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

AP Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking.

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Auburn (62)	17-1	1550	1
2. Duke	16-2	1485	3
3. Iowa St.	15-2	1397	2
4. Alabama	15-3	1338	4
5. Florida	16-2	1262	5
6. Tennessee	16-2	1170	6
7. Houston	14-3	1151	10
8. Michigan St.	16-2	1109	12
9. Kentucky	14-4	1057	8
10. Marquette	15-3	950	7
11. Purdue	15-4	906	17
12. Kansas	13-4	902	9
13. Texas A&M	14-4	794	11
14. Mississippi St.	15-3	731	15
15. Oregon	15-3	638	13
16. Mississippi	15-3	564	21
17. Illinois	13-5	526	19
18. Wisconsin	15-3	437	24
19. UConn	13-5	365	14
20. St. John's	16-3	320	-
21. Michigan	14-4	305	20
22. Missouri	15-3	275	-
23. West Virginia	13-4	240	-
24. Memphis	14-4	232	18
25. Louisville	14-5	125	-

Others receiving votes: Texas Tech 104, Utah St. 38, Vanderbilt 35, Gonzaga 34, Georgia 30, Clemson 30, Arizona 21, Saint Mary's 12, Cincinnati 4, Baylor 4, UC Irvine 3, Wake Forest 2, Creighton 2, Bradley 1, Maryland 1.

USA Today Men's Top 25

The USA Today Sports Top 25 men's basketball poll, with team's records through Sunday in parentheses, total points based on 25 for first place through one point for 25th, ranking in last week's poll and first-place votes received.

	Pts	Prv	1st
1 Auburn (17-1)	774	1	30
2 Duke (16-2)	739	3	0
3 Alabama (15-3)	672	5	0
4 Iowa State (15-2)	668	2	1
5 Houston (14-3)	623	8	0
6 Florida (16-2)	615	4	0
7 Tennessee (16-2)	584	6	0
8 Michigan St. (16-2)	558	12	0
9 Kentucky (14-4)	478	9	0
10 Marquette (15-3)	473	7	0
11 Kansas (13-4)	467	10	0
12 Purdue (15-4)	452	15	0
13 Texas A&M (14-4)	383	11	0
14 Mississippi St. (15-3)	341	18	0
15 Oregon (15-3)	309	14	0
16 Mississippi (15-3)	272	21	0
17 Illinois (13-5)	266	20	0
18 Connecticut (13-5)	230	13	0
19 Wisconsin (15-3)	194	NR	0
20 Michigan (14-4)	180	19	0
21 St. John's (16-3)	167	NR	0
22 Memphis (14-4)	130	17	0
23 West Virginia (13-4)	107	25	0
24 Missouri (15-3)	77	NR	0
25 Texas Tech (13-4)	53	NR	0

Dropped out: No. 16 Gonzaga (14-6); No. 22 Utah State (16-2); No. 23 Georgia (14-4); No. 24 Baylor (11-6).

Others receiving votes: Gonzaga (14-6) 43; Louisville (14-5) 43; Georgia (14-4) 39; Clemson (15-4) 28; Utah State (16-2) 26; Saint Mary's (16-3) 25; Vanderbilt (15-3) 16; Oklahoma (14-4) 16; Maryland (14-5) 8; Creighton (12-6) 7; Arizona (11-6) 6; Baylor

(11-6) 2; UC Irvine (17-2) 2; UCLA (12-6) 2.

Monday's men's scores

EAST

Brown 83, Cornell 82
Colgate 87, Bucknell 80
Drexel 60, Hofstra 55
Georgetown 64, Villanova 63
LIU 72, Mercyhurst 63, OT
Le Moyne 73, Stonehill 72
Morehouse 79, Howard 76
Penn 82, Harvard 67
Penn St. 80, Rutgers 72
Princeton 71, Columbia 67
Wagner 70, St. Francis (Pa.) 68, 2OT
Yale 83, Dartmouth 67

SOUTH

Bethune-Cookman 73, Ark.-Pine Bluff 64
Florida A&M 83, MVSU 53
Hampton 74, NC A&T 73
Lamar 78, Nicholls 74
McNeese St. 79, Stephen F. Austin 59
Norfolk St. 105, Washington Adventist 42
Northwestern St. 73, New Orleans 61
UNC-Wilmington 85, William & Mary 74

SOUTHWEST
Alcorn St. 78, Prairie View 70
Houston Christian 76, Texas A&M-CC 72
SE Louisiana 76, East Texas A&M 68
Texas Rio Grande Valley 85, Incarnate Word 78
Texas Southern 81, Jackson St. 73

FAR WEST

Fairleigh Dickinson 58, Chicago St. 48
Montana 72, Idaho 67
Montana St. 74, E. Washington 64
New Mexico 95, Fresno St. 67

Men's Top 25 schedule

Tuesday's games

No. 3 Iowa St. (15-2) vs. UCF (12-5)
No. 4 Alabama (15-3) vs. Vanderbilt (15-3)
No. 6 Tennessee (16-2) vs. No. 14 Mississippi St. (15-3)
No. 7 Houston (14-3) vs. Utah (11-6)
No. 10 Marquette (15-3) at Seton Hall (6-12)
No. 11 Purdue (15-4) vs. Ohio St. (10-8)
No. 15 Oregon (15-3) vs. Washington (10-8)
No. 18 Wisconsin (15-3) at UCLA (12-6)
No. 19 UConn (13-5) vs. Butler (8-10)
No. 22 Missouri (15-3) at Texas (12-6)
No. 23 West Virginia (13-4) vs. Arizona St. (10-7)
No. 25 Louisville (14-5) at SMU (14-4)

Wednesday's games

No. 5 Florida (16-2) at South Carolina (10-8)
No. 12 Kansas (13-4) at TCU (10-7)
No. 13 Texas A&M (14-4) at No. 16 Mississippi (15-3)
No. 20 St. John's (16-3) vs. Xavier (12-7)

Thursday's games

No. 17 Illinois (13-5) vs. Maryland (14-5)
No. 24 Memphis (14-4) vs. Wichita St. (11-7)

Friday's games

No. 10 Marquette (15-3) vs. Villanova (12-7)
No. 11 Purdue (15-4) vs. No. 21 Michigan (14-4)

Saturday's games

No. 1 Auburn (17-1) vs. No. 6 Tennessee (16-2)
No. 2 Duke (16-2) at Wake Forest (14-4)
No. 3 Iowa St. (15-2) at Arizona St. (10-7)
No. 4 Alabama (15-3) vs. LSU (12-6)
No. 5 Florida (16-2) vs. Georgia (14-4)
No. 7 Houston (14-3) at No. 12 Kansas (13-4)
No. 8 Michigan St. (16-2) vs. Rutgers (10-8) at New York
No. 9 Kentucky (14-4) at Vanderbilt (15-3)
No. 13 Texas A&M (14-4) at Texas (12-6)
No. 14 Mississippi St. (15-3) at South Carolina (10-8)
No. 15 Oregon (15-3) at Minnesota (9-9)
No. 16 Mississippi (15-3) at No. 22 Missouri (15-3)
No. 19 UConn (13-5) at Xavier (12-7)
No. 23 West Virginia (13-4) at Kansas St. (7-10)

Sunday's games

No. 17 Illinois (13-5) vs. Northwestern (11-7)
No. 18 Wisconsin (15-3) vs. Nebraska (12-6)

No. 24 Memphis (14-4) vs. UAB (11-7)

AP Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking.

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. UCLA (27)	17-0	747	1
2. South Carolina (1)	18-1	717	2
3. Notre Dame (2)	16-2	687	3
4. Southern Cal	17-1	660	4
5. LSU	20-0	614	5
6. UConn	17-2	588	6
7. Texas	17-2	575	7
8. Maryland	16-1	553	8
9. TCU	19-1	504	10
10. Kansas St.	19-1	491	11
11. Kentucky	16-1	438	12
12. Ohio St.	17-1	426	9
13. North Carolina	17-3	394	14
14. Duke	15-4	355	16
15. Oklahoma	15-4	302	13
16. West Virginia	15-3	259	20
17. Tennessee	15-3	248	15
18. Georgia Tech	16-3	210	17
19. Alabama	17-3	209	19
20. NC State	14-4	197	21
21. Michigan St.	15-3	179	22
22. California	17-3	148	18
23. Minnesota	17-2	62	24
24. Michigan	13-5	50	-
25. Baylor	16-3	37	-

Others receiving votes: Nebraska 35, Creighton 28, Mississippi 9, Utah 9, Vanderbilt 9, Oklahoma St. 5, South Dakota St. 2, Harvard 2, Mississippi St. 1.

Monday's women's scores

EAST

Brown 49, Cornell 39
Columbia 58, Princeton 50
Fairleigh Dickinson 49, Chicago St. 43
Harvard 73, Penn 44
Le Moyne 69, Stonehill 67
Mercyhurst 78, LIU Brooklyn 51
St. Francis (Pa.) 51, Wagner 47
Texas 89, Maryland 51
Yale 70, Dartmouth 67

MIDWEST

Ball St. 77, Toledo 63
Nebraska 91, Wisconsin 60

SOUTHWEST

UCLA 72, Baylor 57

FAR WEST

Idaho 70, Montana 57
Loyola Marymount 55, San Diego 52
Montana St. 58, E. Washington 56

Women's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games

No. 4 Southern Cal (17-1) at Purdue (7-11)
No. 6 UConn (17-2) vs. Villanova (10-9)
No. 9 TCU (19-1) at Oklahoma St. (15-3)
No. 16 West Virginia (15-3) at Arizona St. (8-11)
No. 21 Michigan St. (15-3) vs. Penn St. (10-9)
No. 23 Minnesota (17-2) vs. No. 24 Michigan (13-5)

Thursday's games

No. 1 UCLA (17-0) at Rutgers (8-11)
No. 2 South Carolina (18-1) vs. No. 5 LSU (20-0)
No. 3 Notre Dame (16-2) at Boston College (12-8)
No. 7 Texas (17-2) vs. No. 17 Tennessee (15-3)
No. 8 Maryland (16-1) at No. 12 Ohio St. (17-1)
No. 11 Kentucky (16-1) at Texas A&M (9-8)
No. 13 North Carolina (17-3) vs. Wake Forest (7-11)
No. 14 Duke (15-4) at SMU (10-9)
No. 18 Georgia Tech (16-3) at Virginia (11-8)
No. 20 NC State (14-4) at Syracuse (7-11)
No. 22 California (17-3) at Stanford (10-8)

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

ATHLETICS — Agreed to terms with RHPs Jhose Brea, Yerlin Burgos, Jesus Delgado, Edwin Mendoza, Ricardo Osorio, Ricardo Reyes, Yordan Rodriguez, C Alverson Barazarte, SSS Luis Cuevas, Yorvit Diaz, Ayden Johnson, OFs Breyson Gueez, Darwin Ozuna, Carlos Salmemon and SS/RHP Shotaro Morii on minor league contracts.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with OF Anthony Santander on a five-year contract. Designated LHP Brandon Eisert for assignment.

National League

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Designated 3B Tristan Gray for assignment.

FOOTBALL National Football League

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Hired Scott Peters as offensive line coach and Michael McCarthy as assistant offensive line coach.

DETROIT LIONS — Agreed to terms with LB Abraham Beauplan, OLS Kingsley Eguakim, Daron Gilbert, Jamarco Jones, Loren Strickland, QB Jake Fromm, SS Erick Hallet, Chris Smith, WR Tom Kennedy, CB Stanley Thomas-Oliver and DL Isaac Ukwu on reserve/futures contracts.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Hired Lou Anarumo as defensive coordinator.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Agreed to terms with OL AJ Arcuri, WRs Quintez Cephus, Drake Stoops, ILBs Tony Fields II, Elias Neal, CBs A.J. Green, Shaun Jolly, Cam Lampkin, Charles Woods, DTs Jack Hefflin, David Olajiga, S Tanner Ingle and OLB Keir Thomas on reserve/futures contracts.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed RB Jonathan Ward to a reserve/futures contract.

HOCKEY National Hockey League

NHL Department of Safety — Suspended Vancouver D Tyler Myers for three games for cross-checking Edmonton's Evan Bouchard on Saturday, Jan. 18. Suspended Edmonton C Connor McDavid for three games for cross-checking Vancouver's Connor Garland on Saturday, Jan. 18.

ANAHEIM DUCKS — Reassigned RW Sam Colangelo to San Diego (AHL).

BUFFALO SABRES — Loaned F Tyson Kozak to Rochester (AHL). Reinstated F Jiri Kulich from injured reserve.

CAROLINA HURRICANES — Sent D Ty Smith to Chicago (AHL).

COLORADO AVALANCHE — Recalled LW Jere Innala from Colorado (AHL). Reassigned C Ivan Ivan to Colorado. Reassigned LW Jere Innala to Colorado.

COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Reinstated RW Justin Danforth from injured reserve.

DALLAS STARS — Loaned RW Matej Blumel and C Justin Hryckowian to Texas (AHL).

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Sent LW Brian Halonen and D Colton White to Utica (AHL).

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Placed C Ryan Poehling on injured reserve. Recalled C Rodrigo Abbots from Lehigh Valley (AHL).

SAN JOSE SHARKS — Reinstated RW Nikolai Kovalenko from injured reserve.

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Recalled D Max Crozier from Syracuse (AHL).

VANCOUVER CANUCKS — Recalled D Mark Friedman from Abbotsford (AHL).

SOCCER Major League Soccer

SAN ANTONIO FC — Signed D Alexis Souahy to a contract.

TORONTO FC — Signed G Luka Gavran to a three-year contract extension that includes an 2028 club option.

National Women's Soccer League

RACING LOUISIANA FC — Signed F Allie George to a one-year contract.

SAN DIEGO WAVE FC — Signed G DiDi Haracic to a one-year contract. Signed M Favour Emmanuel to a two-year contract that includes 2027 mutual options. Signed D Sintia Cabezas to a two-year contract and loaned her to USL Super League side Lexington SC through the 2025 season.

WASHINGTON SPIRIT — Signed G Sandy MacIver to a three-year contract extension.

IU prepares for revenue sharing by cutting jobs

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The new revenue-sharing model in college sports is forcing the Indiana University athletic department to cut costs — even if it means cutting jobs.

School officials have eliminated 25 athletic department positions, a person with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press

on Monday. The person asked for anonymity since the school had not made an official statement.

It's clear that the Hoosiers and plenty of other schools are facing an unprecedented dilemma — pay players market value or risk becoming less competitive on the field. In Bloomington, the solution appears to be running a leaner department.

The Hoosiers gave football coach Curt Cignetti, the Associated Press Coach of the Year, a pay raise after he won a school-record 11 games and led Indiana into the College Football Playoff for the first time in school history. Athletic director Scott Dolson's desire to desire to keep Indiana's football program in the national conversation poses a challenge, given the increasing financial pressure on his department.

As part of a court settlement, the NCAA agreed to provide nearly \$2.8 billion to former athletes who were barred from earning money off their name, image and likeness before a 2021 Supreme Court decision that cleared the way for such payments. The NCAA intends to provide \$1.2 billion of that total while the schools must come up with the rest.

A new revenue-sharing model also will allow each participating school to directly pay players a projected total of \$22 million next season, instead of relying on the NIL collectives currently in place.

Purdue athletic director Mike Bobinski repeatedly promised to provide the full amount as the Boilermakers searched for a new football coach, and Dolson appears poised to follow suit.

For the Hoosiers, that means cutting costs in places such as the athletic department's compliance and communication divisions by roughly 10%. Indiana plans to leave about a dozen vacant jobs unfilled while laying off about 13 employees — some of whom have worked in the athletic department for decades.

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Cignetti

TENNIS

Australian Open

**Tuesday At Melbourne, Australia
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Quarterfinals**

Alexander Zverev (2), Germany, def. Tommy Paul (12), United States, 7-6 (1), 7-6 (0), 2-6, 6-1.
Novak Djokovic (7), Serbia, def. Carlos Alcaraz (3), Spain, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.

Women's Singles Quarterfinals

Paula Badosa (11), Spain, def. Coco Gauff (3), United States, 7-5, 6-4.
Aryna Sabalenka (1), Belarus, def. Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (27), Russia, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3.

Men's Doubles Quarterfinals

Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori (3), Italy, def. Nuno Borges and Francisco Cabral, Portugal, 6-4, 7-6 (4).
Andre Goransson, Sweden, and Sem Verbeek, Netherlands, def. Mate Pavic,

Croatia, and Marcelo Arevalo-Gonzalez (1), El Salvador, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Women's Doubles Quarterfinals

Gabriela Dabrowski, Canada, and Erin Routliffe (2), New Zealand, def. Miyu Kato, Japan, and Renata Zarazua, Mexico, 6-3, 6-2.
Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, and Jelena Ostapenko (3), Latvia, def. Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, and Marta Kostyuk, Ukraine, 6-2, 5-7, 7-5.

Mixed Doubles Quarterfinals

Olivia Nicholls and Henry Patten, Britain, def. Irina Khromacheva, Russia, and Jackson Withrow, United States, 6-2, 6-2.
Michael Venus and Erin Routliffe (2), New Zealand, def. Asia Muhammad, United States, and Andres Molteni (8), Argentina, 6-7 (2), 6-1, 10-5.
John Peers and Olivia Gadecki, Australia, def. Rohan Bopanna, India, and Zhang Shuai, China, 2-6, 6-4, 11-9.
John-Patrick Smith and Kimberly Birrell, Australia, def. Kevin Krawietz, Germany, and Ellen Perez (3), Australia, 6-2, 3-6, 10-6.

AP SPORTLIGHT

Jan. 22

1920 — The New York Yankees announce they will be the first team to wear uniform numbers, according to the player's position in batting order.

1960 — Paul Pender beats Sugar Ray Robinson in a 15-round split decision to capture the world middle

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	48	30	16	2	62	152	137
Florida	47	27	17	3	57	153	142
Tampa Bay	45	25	17	3	53	165	128
Ottawa	46	24	18	4	52	132	127
Boston	48	23	19	6	52	133	153
Montreal	46	23	19	4	50	142	155
Detroit	46	21	21	4	46	131	150
Buffalo	46	17	24	5	39	142	159

Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	46	31	10	5	67	164	114
Carolina	47	28	16	3	59	156	132
New Jersey	49	26	17	6	58	148	125
Columbus	47	22	18	7	51	157	158
N.Y. Rangers	46	22	20	4	48	134	142
Philadelphia	47	21	20	6	48	146	161
Pittsburgh	48	19	21	8	46	143	179
N.Y. Islanders	46	19	20	7	45	124	138

Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	48	31	14	3	65	167	118
Minnesota	47	28	15	4	60	140	134
Dallas	46	29	16	1	59	148	115
Colorado	48	28	19	1	57	160	150
St. Louis	48	23	21	4	50	138	143
Utah	46	20	19	7	47	132	139
Nashville	45	16	22	7	39	115	139
Chicago	47	15	28	4	34	123	162

Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	47	29	14	4	62	160	132
Edmonton	46	29	14	3	61	151	126
Los Angeles	43	25	13	5	55	128	105
Calgary	45	22	16	7	51	120	132
Vancouver	45	20	15	10	50	129	143
Seattle	48	21	24	3	45	143	154
Anaheim	46	18	22	6	42	111	145
San Jose	49	14	29	6	34	125	175

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.

Monday's games

Boston 6, San Jose 3
 Minnesota 3, Colorado 1
 Seattle 6, Buffalo 4
 St. Louis 5, Vegas 4, SO
 N.Y. Islanders 3, Columbus 1
 Toronto 5, Tampa Bay 3
 Carolina 4, Chicago 3, OT
 Utah 5, Winnipeg 2
 Pittsburgh 5, Los Angeles 1

Tuesday's games

Detroit at Philadelphia
 Ottawa at N.Y. Rangers
 Tampa Bay at Montreal
 Carolina at Dallas
 San Jose at Nashville
 Washington at Edmonton
 Buffalo at Vancouver
 Florida at Anaheim

Wednesday's games

Boston at New Jersey
 Columbus at Toronto
 Winnipeg at Colorado
 Florida at Los Angeles

Thursday's games

Columbus at Carolina
 Montreal at Detroit
 Ottawa at Boston
 Philadelphia at N.Y. Rangers
 Utah at Minnesota
 Vegas at St. Louis
 Buffalo at Calgary
 Vancouver at Edmonton
 Pittsburgh at Anaheim
 Washington at Seattle
 Nashville at San Jose

Scoring leaders

Through Monday				
	GP	G	A	PTS
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	48	18	56	74
Nikita Kucherov, TB	43	21	48	69
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	46	33	36	69
Mitch Marner, TOR	48	15	52	67
Connor McDavid, EDM	43	20	45	65
Mikko Rantanen, COL	48	25	38	63
Kyle Connor, WPG	48	26	34	60
Jack Eichel, LV	46	12	46	58
Jack Hughes, NJ	49	18	37	55
Travis Konecny, PHI	47	21	33	54
Mark Scheifele, WPG	48	27	27	54
David Pastrnak, BOS	48	22	31	53
Cale Makar, COL	48	15	37	52
Jesper Bratt, NJ	49	15	37	52
Martin Necas, CAR	47	16	36	52

ROUNDUP

Kings return to LA, fall to Penguins

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin scored milestone goals and the Pittsburgh Penguins defeated Los Angeles 5-1 on Monday night, snapping the Kings' nine-game home win streak.

Crosby, Anthony Beauvillier and Kevin Hayes each had a goal and an assist. Cody Glass also scored for Pittsburgh, and Alex Nedeljkovic stopped 25 shots.

Adrian Kempe had the Los Angeles goal and David Rittich made 27 saves.

The Kings honored firefighters and first responders in the first game back in their downtown arena since the catastrophic wildfires that devastated large parts of Los Angeles.

The Penguins and Kings wore LAFD caps during pregame warmups. Firefighters and first responders from various departments in the region were honored at center ice before the game.

The Kings replaced their traditional logo at center ice with a graphic paying tribute to the Los Angeles Fire Department.

"To see the guys out there and the gals, it was humbling. I don't know. I just felt that way," Kings coach Jim Hiller said about the ceremony. "I felt a little emotional. I just felt like those people have been out there doing some pretty amazing things that we just saw a little bit from a long distance. And we're in our own little bubble doing what we have to do. It brought it to life for me, pretty personal, and it's just disappointing we couldn't do more with it."

Crosby picked up his 50th point of the season 14:09 into the first period when he got a piece of Matthew Grzelcyk's shot from the point and put it past Rittich to make it 2-0. Crosby is the 11th player in NHL history with at least 50 points in 18 or more seasons.

Bruins 6, Sharks 3: Charlie Coyle scored a pair of third-period goals, stealing the spotlight from fellow Boston University product Macklin Celebrini in his first game back at the TD Garden as an NHLer and leading host Boston to a victory over San Jose.

It was the Bruins' 14th straight victory over the Sharks.

Coyle converted a backhanded pass from Matt Poitras to make it 3-3 with about 12 minutes left in the game for his first goal since Dec. 27. He made it 4-3 four minutes later on a shot that bounced off goalie Yaroslav Askarov's pads and into the net.

It was the second own goal for San Jose on the day: David Pastrnak's second-period score ricocheted off Sharks defenseman



JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA/AP

The Kings pay tribute to the Los Angeles Fire Department at center ice during a game against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Monday in Los Angeles. It was the first game in LA for the Kings since January 4.

Jake Walman, who was standing at the top of the crease when the Boston forward banked the puck into the net off his skates.

Wild 3, Avalanche 1: Yakov Trenin scored against his former team early in the third period, and visiting Minnesota beat Colorado.

Jake Middleton had a goal and an assist, Brock Faber also scored and Marc-Andre Fleury made 26 saves for the Wild.

The game was tied entering the third period but Trenin gave Minnesota a 2-1 lead with a wrister in the slot that beat Mackenzie Blackwood at 2:08. Faber scored 1:35 later to make it a two-goal game.

Nathan MacKinnon, the NHL leader in points, had tied the game with 1:08 left in the second with his 18th goal of the season.

Kraken 6, Sabres 4: Jamie Oleksiak scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, and Adam Larsson and Jared McCann added scores in the third as host Seattle beat Buffalo.

Oleksiak's goal at the 16:34 mark snapped a 3-all tie and came less than a minute after the Sabres' Tage Thompson scored to erase a two-goal deficit.

Jack Quinn's goal just over 5 minutes into the game gave Buffalo an early lead. The Kraken assumed the lead after goals by John Hayden, Chandler Stephenson in the first, and Matty Beniers made it 3-1 midway through the second.

The Sabres countered with scores by Jason Zucker and Thompson, who made it 3-all at 15:38 with his 20th goal of the season. Oleksiak put Seattle back in

front, and scores by Larsson and McCann put the game out of reach in the third.

Blues 5, Golden Knights 4 (SO): Jake Neighbours and Brayden Schenn scored during a shootout to lift visiting St. Louis past Vegas.

The Blues, who have a 12-8-8 record against the Golden Knights, improved to 4-1-1 in their last six games played in Vegas.

Schenn, Neighbours, Nathan Walker and Cam Fowler scored for St. Louis in regulation. Jordan Binnington made 28 saves.

The Blues inched closer in the Western Conference playoff race and are now tied with Vancouver, both with 50 points and one point shy of Calgary for the second wild-card spot.

Maple Leafs 5, Lightning 3: Matthew Knies had two goals and an assist as host Toronto held on late to down Tampa Bay.

Auston Matthews and William Nylander also scored for the Maple Leafs. Joseph Woll made 27 saves. Mitch Marner added an empty-net goal and two assists.

Nick Paul scored twice for the Lightning and Darren Raddysh had a goal and an assist. Jonas Johansson stopped 23 shots. Victor Hedman chipped in two assists.

Toronto, which picked up a third straight regulation victory over Tampa Bay this season, top the Atlantic Division with 62 points after extending its current winning streak to three games.

Islanders 3, Blue Jackets 1: Bo Horvat scored twice in host New York's three-goal second period, and the Islanders beat Columbus.

Simon Holmstrom also scored and Mathew Barzal had two assists as New York won its second straight and fifth in seven games. Ilya Sorokin made 25 saves.

Kent Johnson scored for the Blue Jackets and Elvis Merzlikins had 22 saves, but Columbus ended a seven-game point streak (6-0-1).

The Islanders scored three goals in a span of 5:04 in the second period to take the 3-1 lead and held on to win consecutive games at home for the first time this season.

Hurricanes 4, Blackhawks 3 (OT): Sebastian Aho scored 59 seconds into overtime, and visiting Carolina beat Chicago.

Seth Jarvis, Jordan Staal and Jesperi Kotkaniemi also scored for the Hurricanes in their second straight win. Staal picked up his 700th career point in game No. 1,300.

Freddie Andersen made 22 saves for Carolina in his first game since Oct. 26 and No. 500 for his career. He had been sidelined by a knee injury.

Utah 5, Jets 2: Connor Ingram made 23 saves and Olli Maatta scored his first goal for host Utah in a victory over Winnipeg.

Logan Cooley, Barrett Hayton, Matias Maccelli and Clayton Keller also scored to help Utah win its second consecutive home game. Hayton, Josh Doan and Nick Schmaltz each had two assists.

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 23 shots for the Jets. Nino Niederreiter and Dylan DeMelo scored in the third period as Winnipeg avoided its second shutout loss of the season.

NBA

Pelicans complete record rally

McCollum, Murray fuel resurgent New Orleans' franchise-best comeback win

By **BRETT MARTEL**
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — CJ McCollum highlighted a 45-point performance with 3-pointers and reverse layups in the clutch.

Dejounte Murray's relentless pressure on both ends of the court left him one rebound short of a triple-double.

And the New Orleans Pelicans pulled off the largest comeback in franchise history.

As injury-ridden, star-crossed and miserable as much of their season has been, the Pelicans don't seem inclined to give up.

"Huge credit to our guys in the locker room pulling together," New Orleans coach Willie Green said after his team erased a 25-point Utah lead and beat the Jazz, 123-119, in overtime on Monday night. "This was a hard game to win."

Little has gone right for the Pelicans this season.

Star power forward Zion Williamson, who recently returned from a left hamstring injury, couldn't play against Utah because of a non-COVID illness. He's missed 34 of New Orleans' 44 games this season.

The Pelicans' top defender, Herb Jones, is out indefinitely with a shoulder injury, while high-scoring wing Brandon Ingram has missed 20 straight games with a left ankle sprain.

New Orleans had further matchup problems inside against Utah because rookie 7-foot center Yves Missi missed his second straight game with a non-COVID



PETER FOREST/AP

Guard CJ McCollum scored 45 points as the Pelicans came back from a 25-point deficit for a 123-119 overtime victory over the Utah Jazz on Monday in New Orleans. The Pelicans won their fourth straight game.

illness.

The Jazz outrebounded the Pelicans 63-45, had 23 second-chance points and outscored New Orleans 60-40 in the paint. Yet the Pelicans (12-32), who will be hard-pressed to climb back into contention for a playoff berth, won their fourth straight game and seventh in 10.

"We were missing some guys who rebound the ball well," McCollum said. "Sometimes, it's not Xs and Os. It's Jimmies and Joes."

McCollum, 33, has scored 45 or more points twice in 10 games, starting with 50 in a victory over Washington on Jan. 3.

"CJ was incredible and once he got going I thought his teammates did a great job of trying to find him," Green said. "We were drawing stuff up for him. He executed offensively over and over again. Without that effort, it's hard for us to win that game."

Now in his 12th NBA season, McCollum said he likes to think his game will "age well."

"I ain't out here dunking on people," he said. "It's skill. It's strategy. It's angles. It's footwork. It's a jump shot that never leaves. I'll be able to shoot when I'm 40."

Murray, who missed 17 games early this season with a hand injury, also is rounding into form and had 26 points, 11 assists, nine rebounds, and two steals Monday.

"He was super, super aggressive when we needed him to be," McCollum said.

Meanwhile, Trey Murphy III prolonged his recent run of productive form with 24 points, highlighted by a 3 late in overtime that all but sealed it. Additional help came from 2023 first-round draft choice Jordan Hawkins, who hit three 3-pointers and finished with 18 points.

McCollum lamented that one of New Orleans' three most recent losses came by a single point in Boston, where he missed a last-second floater for the win.

"I don't take these wins for granted because it took us like two months to get five wins," McCollum said.

"You've got to ride the wave and just keep your perspective in check."

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	30	13	.698	—
New York	28	16	.636	2½
Philadelphia	15	26	.366	14
Brooklyn	14	29	.326	16
Toronto	10	32	.238	19½

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	22	20	.524	—
Orlando	23	21	.523	—
Miami	21	20	.512	½
Charlotte	11	28	.282	9½
Washington	6	35	.146	15½

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	36	6	.857	—
Milwaukee	24	17	.585	11½
Indiana	24	19	.558	12½
Detroit	22	21	.512	14½
Chicago	19	25	.432	18

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	28	14	.667	—
Memphis	28	15	.651	½
Dallas	23	20	.535	5½
San Antonio	19	22	.463	8½
New Orleans	12	32	.273	17

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	35	7	.833	—
Denver	26	16	.619	9
Minnesota	22	21	.512	13½
Portland	14	28	.333	21
Utah	10	31	.244	24½

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	24	18	.571	—
L.A. Lakers	22	18	.550	1
Sacramento	22	20	.524	2
Phoenix	21	21	.500	3
Golden State	21	21	.500	3

Sunday's games

Miami 128, San Antonio 107
Denver 113, Orlando 100
Oklahoma City 127, Brooklyn 101
Milwaukee 123, Philadelphia 109
L.A. Clippers 116, L.A. Lakers 102
Sacramento 123, Washington 100
Portland 113, Chicago 102

Monday's games

Charlotte 110, Dallas 105
Detroit 107, Houston 96
Memphis 108, Minnesota 106
New York 119, Atlanta 110
Cleveland 118, Phoenix 92
Boston 125, Golden State 85
New Orleans 123, Utah 119, OT
Chicago 112, L.A. Clippers 99

Tuesday's games

New York at Brooklyn
Orlando at Toronto
Portland at Miami
Philadelphia at Denver
Washington at L.A. Lakers

Wednesday's games

Detroit at Atlanta
Minnesota at Dallas
Phoenix at Brooklyn
Charlotte at Memphis
Cleveland at Houston
Milwaukee at New Orleans
Utah at Oklahoma City
Golden State at Sacramento
Boston at L.A. Clippers

Thursday's games

San Antonio at Indiana
Portland at Orlando
Miami at Milwaukee
Toronto at Atlanta
Dallas at Oklahoma City
Sacramento at Denver
Boston at L.A. Lakers
Chicago at Golden State
Washington at L.A. Clippers

Scoring leaders

Through Monday					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Antetokoun., MIL	35	439	220	1102	31.5
Gil-Alexander, OKC	41	456	297	1291	31.5
Jokic, DEN	36	412	187	1085	30.1
Ball, CHA	28	284	131	819	29.3
Tatum, BOS	40	370	215	1101	27.5
Durant, PHO	32	315	175	872	27.3
Maxey, PHI	34	309	170	897	26.4
Edwards, MIN	43	386	176	1130	26.3
Brunson, NY	43	386	252	1125	26.2
Fox, SAC	39	373	185	1010	25.9

ROUNDUP

Ball, Bridges lead Hornets over Mavericks

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — LaMelo Ball and Miles Bridges each scored 23 points and the Charlotte Hornets held on to beat the Dallas Mavericks 110-105 on Monday to extend their winning streak to a season-high three games.

Nick Smith Jr. added 19 points and Mark Williams overcame foul trouble to finish with 13 points and 13 rebounds for the Hornets (11-28).

Kyrie Irving had 33 points and Daniel Gafford added a career-high 31 points and 15 rebounds for the Mavericks (23-20), who've lost four of their last five games.

Pistons 107, Rockets 96: Cade Cunningham had 32 points, nine rebounds and seven assists to lead visiting Detroit past Houston.

Fred VanVleet scored 20 points, and Jalen Green scored 19, and Amen Thompson added 17 for the Rockets.

Grizzlies 108, Timberwolves 106: Jaren Jackson Jr. had 24 points, including 15 in the fourth quarter, and Desmond Bane added 22 points as host Memphis used a late rally to beat Minnesota.

Jackson, who was 6 of 8 in the final quarter, added 10 rebounds and two blocks for the Grizzlies, who won their third straight. Ja Morant finished with 19 points, despite going 5-for-16 from the field.

Anthony Edwards led the Timberwolves with 32 points, while Naz Reid finished with 29 points. Edwards had a chance to win the game, but his 3-point attempt with Bane and Jackson guarding him was off the mark.

Knicks 119, Hawks 110: Jalen Brunson scored 34 points as host New York beat Atlanta. It was the 68th 30-plus point game in Brunson's career as a Knick.

Despite Trae Young leading seven Hawks in double-figure scoring with 27, Atlanta fell to 22-20 and had its three-game winning streak snapped. De'Andre Hunter added 22 points off the bench.

Cavaliers 118, Suns 92: Donovan Mitchell scored 33 points — 23 in the second half — and Darius Garland added 16 as host Cleveland began the season's unofficial second half by dominating Phoenix.

The Cavaliers, who opened the season with 15 straight wins, improved the NBA's best record to 36-6 — tied for the eighth-best start in history. They're also 21-2 at home and 13-1 against Western Conference teams.

Kevin Durant scored 23 to lead the Suns, who had won five of six. Devin Booker added 15 and had six turnovers.

Celtics 125, Warriors 85: Jayson Tatum scored 22 points, Kristaps Porzingis had 18 and Boston handed Golden State its most lopsided home loss in 40 years with a victory.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 18. Golden State lost by at least 40 points at home for the sixth time since moving to California in 1962 and first since a 149-104 loss to Dallas on Jan. 15, 1985.

Bulls 112, Clippers 99: Zach LaVine scored 35 points and visiting Chicago defeated Los Angeles to snap a five-game skid.

The Clippers' four-game winning streak ended without starters Kawhi Leonard and Ivica Zubac. Norman Powell scored 27, and James Harden had 17 points and 10 assists.

NFL



REED HOFFMANN/AP

Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes scrambles away from pressure applied by Houston Texans defensive tackle Tim Settle Jr. and linebacker Henry To'oTo'o during the first half Saturday in Kansas City, Mo.

BEHIND THE CALL

'Oh, come on': Did Mahomes push league to tweak rules?

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

NFL officials were heavily scrutinized for some of the flags they threw in the four divisional round games that saw Kansas City, Buffalo, Philadelphia and Washington advance to next weekend's conference championships.

Yet, it was one play that didn't draw a flag could prove a most consequential non-call if the NFL decides to join the NBA and NHL in seriously cracking down on floppers, as ESPN broadcaster Troy Aikman suggested during the Texans-Chiefs game.

NFL players can be penalized for the big umbrella "unsportsmanlike conduct" infraction, but there isn't an official rule against flopping, and Aikman urged the league to address that during one of his several conversations with Joe Buck over the officiating in Kansas City's 23-14 victory.

On the same possession where he benefited from his late slide that caused two Texans to crash into each other, drawing a widely panned unnecessary roughness flag, Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes appeared to try to deke referee Clay Martin's officiating crew into throwing another flag.

Scrambling to his left, Mahomes pulled up just as he went out of bounds. When linebacker Henry To'oTo'o tapped him, Mahomes threw himself dramatically to the ground but failed to fool the officials — or impress Aikman, the Hall of Fame quarterback who earlier took umbrage at the roughing-the-passer call against Hous-

Scoreboard

Wild-card playoffs	
Saturday, Jan. 11	
Houston 32, L.A. Chargers 12	Baltimore 28, Pittsburgh 14
Sunday, Jan. 12	
Buffalo 31, Denver 7	Philadelphia 22, Green Bay 10
Washington 23, Tampa Bay 20	
Monday, Jan. 13	
L.A. Rams 27, Minnesota 9	
Divisional Playoffs	
Saturday, Jan. 18	
Kansas City 23, Houston 14	Washington 45, Detroit 31
Sunday, Jan. 19	
Philadelphia 28, L.A. Rams 22	Buffalo 27, Baltimore 25
Conference Championships	
Sunday, Jan. 26	
AFC	
Buffalo at Kansas City, AFN-Sports, 12:30 a.m. Monday CET, 8:30 a.m. Monday JKT	
NFC	
Washington at Philadelphia, AFN-Sports, 9 p.m. Sunday CET, 5 a.m. Monday JKT	
Super Bowl LIX	
Sunday, Feb. 9	
At New Orleans	
Buffalo or Kansas City vs. Washington or Philadelphia	

ton. "He's trying to draw the penalty. Rather than just run out of bounds, he slows down," Aikman protested. "And that's been the frustration, and I get it. I understand it. That's been the frustration for these defensive players around the league."

Earlier in the drive, Aikman said he "could not disagree" more with the roughing penalty called on To'oTo'o and defensive tackle Folorunso Fatukasi, who smashed into each other and made incidental contact with Mahomes, who was underneath them after his late slide.

When Martin announced the

penalty, Aikman interjected, "Oh, come on!"

"He's a runner. I could not disagree with that one more, and he barely gets hit," Aikman said, noting that Mahomes shouldn't have been afforded the extra protections provided quarterbacks in the pocket once he started running on the play. "That's the second (questionable) penalty now that's been called against the Texans. ... It was a late flag, and it was Clay Martin who threw it."

"They've gotta address it in the offseason," Aikman added. ESPN's rules analyst Russell Yurk concurred that no flag should have been thrown on the play.

After the game, Houston coach DeMeco Ryans suggested his team expected the Chiefs to benefit from the officiating: "We knew going into today it was us versus everybody. And when I say everybody, it's everybody."

Yurk also disagreed with a roughing-the-passer flag on Texans pass rusher Will Anderson Jr. in the first quarter that erased a three-and-out by Kansas City, which went on to score a field goal on that drive: "It looked like that first contact was to the upper chest area. I didn't see anything there that supported a foul," Yurk said.

Martin, the referee, told a pool reporter after the game that on the Anderson penalty, "I had forcible contact the facemask area," and on the To'oTo'o infraction, when the quarterback slides, "he is considered defenseless. The onus is on the defender. I had forcible contact there to the hairline, to the helmet."

Source: Lions OC Johnson to become Bears head coach

Associated Press

Ben Johnson helped Jared Goff establish himself as one of the NFL's top quarterbacks.

Now he'll try to do something similar for Caleb Williams.

The Detroit Lions' offensive coordinator has agreed to become the Chicago Bears head coach, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the contract was being finalized.

This will be the first head coaching job for the 38-year-old Johnson, who was widely considered the top candidate on the market after spending the past three seasons as the Lions offensive coordinator under Dan Campbell. He joined Detroit's staff in 2019 following a seven-year run as an assistant with the Miami Dolphins.

With Johnson overseeing the offense, Goff has thrown for more than 4,400 yards each of the past three seasons. He made two of his four career Pro Bowls in that stretch.

The Lions earned the top seed in the NFC at 15-2 before getting stunned by Jayden Daniels and the Washington Commanders in a divisional playoff game on Saturday. Detroit led the league in points per game and finished second in yards passing and total yards per game during the regular season.

The Bears fired Matt Eberflus on Nov. 29 and replaced him on an interim basis with Thomas Brown. Chicago finished last in the NFC North at 5-12 and lost 10 in a row before closing the season with a win at Green Bay.

The development of Williams will be the top priority for Johnson in the wake of the Bears' fourth straight losing season. The No. 1 pick in last year's draft threw for 3,541 yards, 20 touchdowns and six interceptions. But he was sacked a franchise-record and league-leading 68 times.

Johnson has a fan in Williams. "I think it's been really cool to watch," Williams said two weeks ago, when Chicago cleaned out its lockers. "During our game, I would sit back and watch and try and learn something. It was fascinating to watch. He had wrinkles for counters and things like that throughout the game."

Johnson had strong praise for Williams before the Bears faced the Lions in Week 16.

"There's no question that this guy is talented. I remember standing on the sideline last game and you can hear the ball whistle by



REY DEL RIO/AP

Detroit Lions offensive coordinator Ben Johnson is set to be the next head coach of the Chicago Bears according to a source for the AP.

you," Johnson said. "He's got quite a fastball and has some creativity to him, can extend plays and is accurate down the field as well. Like I said, I haven't really dove in and can tell you much more beyond that, but he's been impressive from afar."

The Bears confirmed interviewing 17 candidates. That list included former Seattle Seahawks coach Pete Carroll, former Green Bay Packers and Dallas Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy and former Tennessee Titans coach Mike Vrabel, who got the job in New England.

Chicago has just three playoff appearances since the 2006 team won the NFC. The Bears' lone Super Bowl title came during the 1985 season.

Chicago has not won a postseason game since the 2010 team advanced to the conference title game under Lovie Smith. Johnson becomes their sixth head coach since then, not including Brown.

In three years under general manager Ryan Poles, the Bears are 15-36 with two double-digit losing streaks. They dropped their final 10 games in 2022 while in a teardown mode as part of a franchise-worst 14-game slide.

Chicago came into this season looking for a playoff spot after making some high-profile moves in the offseason, highlighted by Williams' arrival and a blockbuster trade with the Los Angeles Chargers for six-time Pro Bowl receiver Keenan Allen. But after a 4-2 start, the season went off the rails.

The founding NFL franchise fired a head coach during a season for the first time when it let Eberflus go following a series of poor late-game decisions.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Djokovic tops Alcaraz, nears 25th title

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Novak Djokovic refused to let anything stop his pursuit of a record 25th Grand Slam trophy in the Australian Open quarterfinals. Not a problem with his left leg. Not an early deficit. And not the kid across the net, Carlos Alcaraz, who was making things difficult and eyeing his own bit of history.

Djokovic overcame it all, just as he has so often along the way to so many triumphs, moving into the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the 12th time with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Alcaraz in a scintillating showdown Tuesday night between a pair of stars born 16 years apart and at opposite ends of their careers.

“I just wish that this match today was the final,” Djokovic said. “One of the most epic matches I’ve played on this court. On any court.”

The action was non-stop, the shot-making brilliant, even as the encounter stretched on for more than 3½ hours and nearly to 1 a.m. — never more so, perhaps, than when Alcaraz saved a break point in the fourth set. The 33-stroke exchange was the longest of the evening, and when it ended with Djokovic sailing a forehand long, the capacity crowd at Rod Laver Arena went wild. Djokovic reached for his bothersome leg and yelled toward his entourage; Alcaraz, his chest heaving, leaned on a towel



VINCENT THIAN/AP

Novak Djokovic of Serbia plays a backhand return to Carlos Alcaraz of Spain during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Tuesday. Djokovic won to advance to the semifinals.

box and grinned.

Turned out that only delayed the final result.

With his wife, son and daughter cheering in the stands — Dad joked about the late hour after-

ward — the No. 7-seeded Djokovic prevailed thanks to the sort of remarkable returning and no-mistakes-made groundstrokes against Alcaraz that Big Three rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal dealt

with for years.

Djokovic enjoyed some of his own best efforts in the latter stages, pointing to his ear or blowing kisses or spreading his arms while puffing out his chest. There was

the forehand winner on a 22-stroke point that earned the break for a 5-3 lead in the third set. There was that set’s last point, which included a back-to-the-net sprint to chase down a lob. Alcaraz wasn’t shy, either, shouting “Vamos!” and pumping his fists after one particularly booming forehand in the fourth set.

At 4-all, Djokovic grabbed at his thigh and crouched down after stretching for a shot. He finished that game but lost it, before taking a medical timeout. When play resumed, his left thigh was taped, and Alcaraz served out that set. Anyone who thought Djokovic might go gently into the night is not familiar with his game. He began attacking Alcaraz’s serves relentlessly and, soon, the second set was his.

“If I lost that second set, I don’t know if I would continue playing,” Djokovic said, crediting medicine from the tournament doctor with helping him feel better.

When the match ended, Djokovic yelled toward his team’s box, before giving his coach, Andy Murray, a hug. Then Djokovic applauded for No. 3 seed Alcaraz as he left the court.

“I’m sure we are going to see a lot of him,” Djokovic said. “Maybe not as much as I would like.”

On Friday, Djokovic’s 50th major semifinal will come against No. 2 seed Alexander Zverev, a two-time runner-up at majors who beat No. 12 Tommy Paul 7-6 (1), 7-6 (0), 2-6, 6-1. The other men’s quarterfinals are Wednesday: No. 1 Jannik Sinner vs. No. 8 Alex de Minaur, and No. 21 Ben Shelton against unseeded Lorenzo Sonego.

Gauff says she has more work to do after quarterfinal loss

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Coco Gauff’s retooled forehand and serve abandoned her in the worst way and at the worst time at the Australian Open. The unforced errors just kept accumulating Tuesday, and so did the double-faults and break points, often followed by a palm placed over her eyes or a slap to a thigh.

Add it all up, and Gauff’s trip to Melbourne Park — and her 13-match winning streak that dated to late last season — ended in the quarterfinals. Never able to take control on a hot afternoon in Rod Laver Arena, the 2023 U.S. Open champion was eliminated by No. 11 Paula Badosa of Spain 7-5, 6-4.

Using tweaks to some key strokes, and a change to her coaching team after a disappointing end to her title defense in New York in September, the 20-year-old Gauff arrived in Australia with



NG HAN GUAN/AP

Coco Gauff of the United States saw her 13-match winning streak come to an end at the Australian Open against Paula Badosa of Spain.

hopes of earning a second Grand Slam title.

“I feel like (at the) U.S. Open, I

was playing with no solution, so that was more the frustrating part. Today, I feel like I’m playing with

solutions; I know what I need to work on. U.S. Open, I needed to work on my serve. Not saying that my serve is where I want it to be, but I worked on it; obviously, a big improvement. So I want to continue working on that, continue working on playing aggressive,” Gauff said.

“So I feel like I’m on the road to the right way, right path,” she said. “Even though I lost today, I feel like I’m in an upward trajectory.”

The American entered Tuesday with a 9-0 record in 2025; she also won her last four matches of last season to collect the trophy at the WTA Finals in November.

“Just a lot more work to do,” Gauff said after the 1-hour, 43-minute loss to Badosa, who had been 0-2 in Grand Slam quarterfinals. “I’m obviously disappointed, but I’m not completely crushed.”

Badosa now heads to her first Grand Slam semifinal at age 27 —

and less than a year after she was contemplating retirement because of a stress fracture in her back that took what felt like forever to heal and did not initially respond to cortisone injections.

“I wanted to (give) it a last try,” Badosa said, “Well, here I am. So I’m really proud of what we went through with all my team and especially how I (fought) through all that, especially mentally.”

“Emotionally, I wanted it so much,” she continued. “I’m never going to feel freedom until I win the tournament. I’m always like this. It’s my personality. It’s my character.”

In Thursday’s semifinals, she will go up against her close friend, No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, the two-time defending champion in Melbourne. Sabalenka stretched her winning streak in the tournament to 19 matches by getting past No. 27 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-2, 2-6, 6-3.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF



JACOB KUPFERMAN/AP

Ohio State quarterback Will Howard celebrates after a touchdown by running back Quinshon Judkins during the second half of the national championship game against Notre Dame on Monday night in Atlanta. Howard completed 17 of 21 passes for 231 yards and was selected offensive MVP of the game.

Ohio State QB played best during run to title

By ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Will Howard transferred to Ohio State to win a national championship, and he reached that goal by playing the best football of his career throughout the Buckeyes' four games in the College Football Playoff.

He was never better than in the first half and at the end of Ohio State's 34-23 victory over Notre Dame on Monday night.

Howard connected on his first 13 passes to set the record for consecutive completions in a CFP title game. On third-and-11 after the Irish had pulled within eight points, he lofted a pass to Jeremiah Smith for a 56-yard gain that all but sealed the win.

"I give this guy a lot of credit right here," Buckeyes coach Ryan Day said with Howard sitting to his left. "I think he ran the ball 16 times, and we knew it was going to be that way. It was the last game of the season, and we were going to (use all) our bullets. He really put the team on his back."

Howard arrived in Atlanta with a hot hand, and the Irish did nothing to cool him off early. He spread the ball among six receivers, often throwing short and letting them pick up yards after the catch.

He tied the mark for consecutive completions late in the second quarter when he hit Carnell Tate for 20 yards on third-and-7, then broke it with a 15-yard pass to Smith two plays later.

The streak ended when Notre Dame safety Xavier Watts broke up a pass intended for TreVeyon Henderson near the goal line.

"Coming into the season, one thing Coach Day emphasized was taking completions," Howard said. "Maybe I had to check it down or it wasn't perfectly drawn up. You just want to keep the ball moving and stay on schedule."

Alabama's Mac Jones set the previous record with 12 completions in a row against Ohio State in the 2021 championship game.

Howard finished 17-for-21 for 231 yards and was selected offensive MVP of the game. He threw touchdown passes of 8 yards to Smith and 6 yards to Quinshon Judkins in the first half.

Over his four playoff games, Howard completed 75.2% of his throws (82 of 109) for 1,150 yards and eight touchdowns with two interceptions.

Howard's passing against the Irish overshadowed the tough running he did when it was called for. He picked up first downs on five of his first six designed runs or scrambles, and late in the game his 8-yard burst gave the Buckeyes a big first down. He had a career-high 16 carries for a season-best 57 yards.

"It may not always be pretty and sometimes you have to pick it up with your legs," he said.

Howard played his first four years at Kansas State, where he battled injuries and lost a quarterback competition in 2022 before an injury to the starter put him in position to lead the Wildcats to a Big 12 title. He was second-team All-Big 12 in 2023, and Day saw enough in Howard to sign him out of the transfer portal.

The opportunity to play with some of the most talented offensive players in the country made Howard better and positioned him to potentially be a middle- or late-round pick in the NFL Draft.

Howard said going to Ohio State was the best decision of his life.

"It's crazy to look back at all that's happened during my career — going from playing as a freshman at Kansas State and not really knowing what I'm doing and going into my junior year, not thinking I'd be playing and then winning a Big 12 championship. I'm just so unbelievably thankful that I got a chance to be a Buckeye, even if it was just one year."

Buckeyes: Ohio State looked unstoppable early

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who have just overcome some really tough situations, and at the point where there's a lot of people that counted us out (they) just kept swinging and kept fighting," Day said.

It might be that much sweeter because of how it went down in a jam-packed stadium in the middle of SEC country that looked like a Christmas tree — Ohio State fans on one half in red, Notre Dame's on the other in green.

Trailing 31-7, Notre Dame scored two touchdowns and two 2-point conversions to make it a one-score game late in the fourth quarter. The in-stadium camera found legendary Irish coach Lou Holtz in his luxury box, and he ignored all those booing Buckeye fans and flashed a thumbs-up.

But Notre Dame's time was running out. After stopping the Buckeyes on their first two plays and using their timeouts, the Irish put Christian Gray — whose interception wrapped up Notre Dame's semifinal victory over Penn State — in single coverage on Smith.

Smith got behind Gray on the right sideline and Howard dropped his best pass of the season into the hands of the second-team All-American.

It set up a field goal that started the celebration in earnest, and helped Ohio State cover the 8½-point spread at BetMGM Sportsbook.

"It was do or die, it was that type of down," Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman said. "He's a heck of a player. He's difficult to cover."

Howard, a transfer-portal success story from Kansas State, threw for 231 yards and two TDs, but nothing will beat the pass to Smith with the game on the line.

The receiver, who had been bottled up by Texas in the semifinals then fairly quiet for most of this game, finally got loose for the kind of play he's been making all year. He finished with five catches for 88 yards.

"We felt at the end we wanted to give Jeremiah that shot," Day said. "We really hadn't thrown it all night, but I thought, 'Know what, let's be aggressive, let's do this and lay it on the line.'"

Ohio State didn't really look like a team that needed to take risks after scoring touchdowns on its first four possessions, then adding a field goal on its fifth.

When Quinshon Judkins (100 yards, 11 carries, three TDs), a transfer from Mississippi who highlighted Ohio State's judicious use of the ever-growing portal, busted a 70-yard run to set up the score that made it 28-7, this game looked over.

It wasn't, and now Freeman will have to answer a few tough ques-

tions — one about the failed fake punt in the third quarter that turned into a field goal for a 31-7 lead; the other about sending Mitch Jeter in for a short field goal attempt while down 16 and facing fourth-and-goal from the 9. It might have looked like a better call had Jeter's kick not clanged off the left upright.

"I know it's still a two-score game, but you have a better probability of getting 14 points than you do 16 points," Freeman said.

Ohio State dominated most of the night, and all through the playoffs. Really, though, Ohio State was the better team. The Buckeyes outgained Notre Dame 445 yards to 308. Howard completed his first 13 passes and never really got stopped. Ohio State punted a grand total of once.

The Buckeyes rolled through four games in the expanded playoff — what great timing for them that it swelled to a dozen teams in a year they didn't even play for the Big Ten title — by an average score of 36-21.

Ohio State was seeded eighth, but the seedings were pretty much meaningless. The lower seed won every game in the quarterfinal and semifinal rounds, and the Buckeyes dominated in this title-game showdown of No. 7 vs. No. 8.

It puts to rest, for now, angst about that Michigan loss in November — Ohio State's fourth straight in the series — that ended with a brawl after Wolverine players tried to plant a flag at midfield. The whole scene left a lot of folks, both in and out of Buckeye circles, thinking Day, in his sixth season, had outlived his usefulness on a campus that hadn't tasted a title in a decade.

Instead, the Ohio State marching band can dot the "I" next time with the national-title trophy. And Day can join a list of title-winning coaches with Urban Meyer (2014) Jim Tressel (2002), Woody Hayes ("Three yards and a cloud of dust") and Paul Brown (who went on to become the namesake of the NFL's Cleveland Browns).

Day's .873 winning percentage coming into the game was third among coaches with 50-plus games — one spot behind none other than the Notre Dame legend Knute Rockne, himself.

The Notre Dame loss means college football still has never had a Black coach win the national title. Freeman was trying to become the first. Instead, there was another kind of history.

The Big Ten won back-to-back titles for the first time since 1942. Last year's champ was Michigan, which was sitting home watching this one, but still played a special role in a Buckeyes redemption story hardly anyone saw coming.

SPORTS



Record-breaking comeback
Pelicans mount franchise-best rally, beat Jazz in overtime » **NBA, Page 20**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Ohio State wide receiver Emeka Egbuka hoists the trophy after the Buckeyes' 34-23 victory over Notre Dame in the College Football Playoff championship game Monday night in Atlanta. Just seven weeks after a loss to Michigan raised questions about coach Ryan Day's job security, the Buckeyes won their sixth national title.

Buckeyes bag CFP title

Ohio State holds off Notre Dame, wins 1st national championship since 2014

By EDDIE PELLIS
Associated Press

ATLANTA — The pass seemed to hang up there forever. Did it feel like seven weeks? Did it feel like 10 years?

What a great debate for Ohio State fans to have forever.

When that teardrop of a throw from Buckeyes quarterback Will Howard on

third-and-11 finally landed, light as a feather, in the hands of receiver Jeremiah Smith late in the fourth quarter Monday, Ohio State had locked up what would be a 34-23 victory over Notre Dame for its sixth national title and first in a decade.

That 56-yard gain snuffed out a feverish Notre Dame comeback and made the Buckeyes the champion of college football's first

12-team playoff, just as they were champions of its first four-team tournament a decade ago.

"They were running man coverage and I said, 'Hey, I'm gonna let this loose and let him make a play on it,'" Howard said of a play that felt about 100 years removed from Ohio State's once program-defining "Three yards and a cloud of dust."

This was a victory that hardly anyone thought possible a mere seven weeks ago — Nov. 30 — when a 13-10 loss to Michigan led to a near-riot on the field and questions over whether coach Ryan Day would keep his job when the calendar flipped.

"It's a great story about a bunch of guys

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Djokovic now two wins from 25th Slam » Australian Open, Page 22

