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STARS AND STRIPES

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Belarus Ministry of Defense

Belarusian troops disembark from an Mi-8 helicopter during a training exercise in an undated photo. A Russian Mi-8 assigned to a border guard unit made an intrusion into Estonian airspace over the weekend.

Flaring tensions in Baltics

Russian helicopter gunship violates Estonia's airspace ahead of NATO security meeting

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A rare intrusion into Estonian airspace by a Russian Mi-8 attack helicopter has prompted the latest salvo of charges that Moscow is ratcheting up tensions in the Baltic region one week ahead of a major NATO security summit.

Earlier this week, Russia lashed out at Lithuania for imposing a

■ NATO chief says allies in for 'long haul' in Ukraine
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transit ban on certain goods to Russia's military exclave of Kaliningrad. Both the ban and the airspace incursion happened over

the weekend.

The helicopter, assigned to a Russian border guard unit, was flying with its transponders turned off and lingered in Estonian airspace Saturday evening for nearly two minutes, the Estonian Defense Ministry said in a statement Tuesday.

"This is the picture of the threat, how we see the Russian threat,"

Kusti Salm, a ministry official, told local reporters Tuesday. "It has never been as serious as it is now."

In response, Estonia summoned Russian Ambassador Vladimir Lipayev and lodged a formal complaint.

The incident was the second vi-

SEE TENSIONS ON PAGE 6

29 Chinese planes cross Taiwan air defense zone

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Taiwan deployed jets and air defense systems Tuesday after 29 Chinese warplanes, including bombers and fighters, entered its air defense zone, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense.

Chinese aircraft have approached Taiwan's territory repeatedly in recent years, forcing the island's air force to scramble jets in response. Large formations of Chinese military aircraft also approached Taiwan in January and May.

The latest incursion included six bombers and 17 fighters along with electronic warfare, early warning, antisubmarine and aerial refueling planes, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said in a statement posted on its website Tuesday. The air defense identification zone is a wide area beyond a country's airspace where approaching aircraft are required to identify themselves.

"[A]ircraft tasked, radio warnings issued and air defense missile systems deployed to monitor the activities," the ministry said in its statement.

A map tweeted by the ministry the same day shows most of the Chinese planes traveled in a zig-zag flight path south of Taiwan.

The incursion came four days after the launch of China's third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, named for the mainland province opposite Taiwan. A week ago, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman repeated his country's claim to exclusive rights over the Taiwan Strait. The U.S. considers the

SEE TAIWAN ON PAGE 3

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Kellogg's to split into 3 different companies

Associated Press

Kellogg Co., the 116-year-old maker of Frosted Flakes, Rice Krispies, Pringles and Eggo, will split into three companies focused on cereals, snacks and plant-based foods.

Kellogg's, which also owns plant-based food brand Morning-Star Farms, said Tuesday that the spinoff of the yet-to-be-named cereal and plant-based foods companies should be completed by the end of next year.

Kellogg's had net sales of \$14.2

billion in 2021, with \$11.4 billion generated by its snack division, which makes Cheez-Its, Pringles and Pop-Tarts, among other brands. Cereal accounted for another \$2.4 billion in sales last year while plant-based sales totaled around \$340 million.

In a conference call with investors, CEO Steve Cahillane said separating the businesses will make them more nimble and better able to focus on their own products. All three businesses have significant stand-alone potential,

he said.

"Cereal will be solely dedicated to winning in cereal and will not have to compete for resources against the high-growth snacking business," said Cahillane, a former Coca-Cola and AB InBev executive who joined Kellogg in 2017.

Cahillane will become chairman and CEO of the global snacking company. The management team of the cereal company will be named later. The board of directors has approved the spinoffs.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (June 23)	\$1.03
Dollar buys (June 23)	0.9246
British pound (June 23)	\$1.20
Japanese yen (June 23)	132.00
South Korean won (June 23)	1,264.00

South Korea (Won)	1,299.55
Switzerland (Franc)	.9614
Thailand (Baht)	35.32
Turkey (New Lira)	17.3579

(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.)

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770
Britain (Pound)	1.2271
Canada (Dollar)	1.2946
China (Yuan)	6.7024
Denmark (Krone)	7.0438
Egypt (Pound)	18.7503
Euro	.9470
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8500
Hungary (Forint)	375.73
Israel (Shekel)	3.4460
Japan (Yen)	135.87
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3067
Norway (Krone)	9.9301
Philippines (Peso)	54.32
Poland (Zloty)	4.45
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7521
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3881

INTEREST RATES

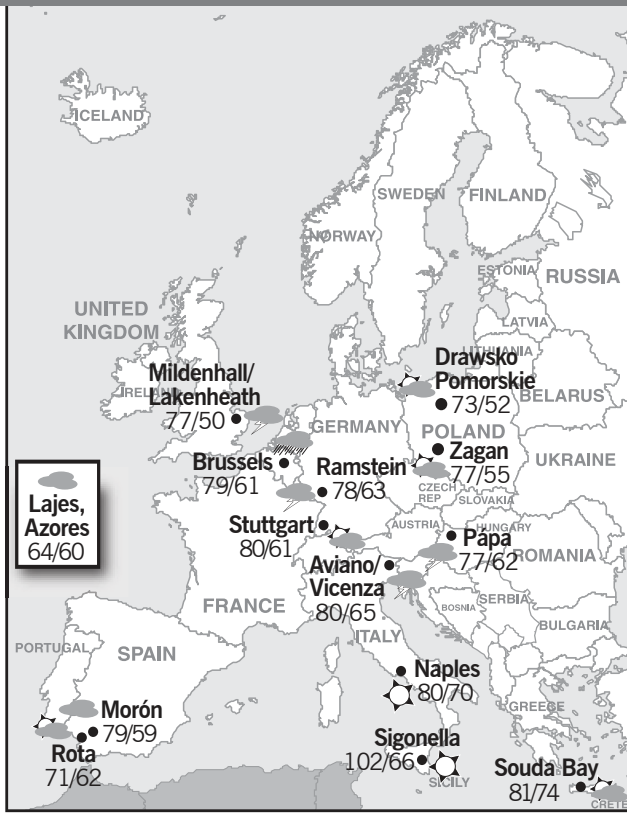
Prime rate	4.75
Interest Rates Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	0.08
3-month bill	1.69
30-year bond	3.39

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

Most land mine use banned, except in S. Korea

By CHRIS MEGERIAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden's administration announced Tuesday that it would restrict the use of anti-personnel land mines by the U.S. military, aligning the country's policy more closely with an international treaty banning the deadly explosives.

"The president believes strongly that we need to curtail their use worldwide," John Kirby, a national security spokesman, said at a White House briefing.

The United States has not extensively deployed the mines since the Gulf War in 1991. But the announcement represents a shift from a more permissive stance under then-President Donald Trump, and it concludes a review that has lasted for more than a year.

Bonnie Jenkins, the State Department's undersecretary for arms control and international security, said the new policy fulfills "a commitment that President Biden made as a candidate," when he described Trump's decision as "reckless."

Anti-personnel land mines are buried underground or scattered on the surface, and they can pose a lethal threat to civilians long after combat has ended. Russia has reportedly used the explosives during its invasion of Ukraine.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., described the White House announcement as a "long overdue recognition that the grave humanitarian



LIM BYUNG-SHICK, YONHAP/AP

South Korean Army soldiers search for landmines near the demilitarized zone that separates the two Koreas in Yeoncheon, north of Seoul, South Korea, on Aug. 1, 2010.

and political costs of using these weapons far exceed their limited military utility."

"As welcome as this step is, the White House needs to put the U.S. on a definitive path to join the treaties banning anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions," he said in a statement. "Neither of these indiscriminate weapons, the horrific consequences of which we are seeing in Ukraine today, belong in the arsenals of civilized nations."

Under the new policy, the U.S. will restrict the use of these explosives outside of its efforts to help defend South Korea from a potential North Korean invasion. Although the U.S. does not currently have any minefields deployed there, Washington has pledged support for Seoul's defense, which includes anti-personnel mines.

The U.S. has a stockpile of 3 million anti-personnel land mines. Under the new policy, any that aren't

needed to protect South Korea will be destroyed. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a question about whether any will be discarded.

The exception regarding the Korean Peninsula, which was also in place during President Barack Obama's administration, leaves the U.S. short of full compliance with the Ottawa Convention, the 1997 treaty intended to eliminate anti-personnel land mines.

Russia is not a signatory to the treaty either, and Human Rights Watch said it has documented Moscow's use of mines during its invasion of Ukraine.

Alicia Arango Olmos, Colombia's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and a top official in the global campaign against the use of land mines, has urged Russia to stop deploying them. "Anti-personnel mines only cause victims, they don't resolve any type of problem," she said in April.

Her office praised the U.S. announcement on Tuesday.

"We welcome this timely decision and thank the United States for your commitment with the principles of the (Ottawa) Convention," the office tweeted. "We need to continue our clearance efforts all around the world until we reach a #MineFreeWorld."

U.S. officials said the Pentagon was working on alternatives to land mines on the Korean Peninsula, but did not detail what those might be.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said the administration "needs to have a better answer about when those alternatives will be developed, rather than just kicking this down the road."

He said the U.S. should continue working to completely comply with the Ottawa Convention.

"We need to get fully in step to fully differentiate ourselves from the international scofflaws like Russia," he said.

Airman arrested in connection with attack on US base in Syria

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An unidentified airman has been arrested in connection with an attack using explosives in April on a small U.S. military base in Syria that wounded four American service members, Air Force officials said Tuesday.

"As part of an ongoing investigation, on June 16, an airman was taken into custody stateside in conjunction with the attack in

Green Village, Syria," Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek wrote in an email. "After reviewing the information in the investigation, the airman's commander made the decision to place him in pretrial confinement."

Stefanek declined to provide the service member's name until prosecutors file charges against the airman.

"It is too early in the process for a charge sheet," she said. "It

will be available if charges are preferred."

The attack occurred in the early morning of April 7 at the base known as Green Village, which is east of the Euphrates River and adjacent to major oil fields. Four U.S. troops received "minor" injuries that included "possible traumatic brain injuries," U.S. officials said at the time.

Several hundred U.S. and coalition forces are stationed at

Green Village as they train local forces to fight remnants of the Islamic State terrorist group, according to the Pentagon.

Though indirect fire was initially blamed for the incident, investigators later found evidence that suggested someone had deliberately placed explosive material in an ammunition storage room and a shower area, according to an April 15 statement by Combined Joint Task Force — Operation Inherent Resolve.

Operation Inherent Resolve is a U.S.-led international coalition under U.S. Central Command that targets the Islamic State, primarily with campaigns in Iraq and Syria.

The investigation, which is being conducted by the Army's Criminal Investigation Division and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, is ongoing.

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Taiwan: China making 'alarming increase' in air, sea confrontations, Austin says

FROM PAGE 1

strait international waters and has sent warships through it on a monthly basis this year.

Chinese aircraft and vessels have made "an alarming increase" in unsafe aerial intercepts and confrontations at sea, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said June 11 at the Shangri-La Dialogue defense summit in Singapore.

"We've witnessed a steady in-

crease in provocative and destabilizing military activity near Taiwan," Austin said.

America's "One China" policy regarding Taiwan remains "unchanged and unwavering," Austin said in the opening speech at the defense summit held each summer in the Asian city-state. "But unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be true for [China]," he said.

Under the "One China" policy, the U.S. acknowledges Beijing's view that it has sovereignty over

Taiwan, which split from the mainland in 1949, but considers Taiwan's status as unsettled.

Chinese aircraft in recent months flew in record numbers near Taiwan, and nearly every day, Austin said. China regards Taiwan, which lies just off its southeast coast, as a renegade province that, at some point, must be unified under Beijing's control.

The United States formally switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979. The

U.S., however, has continued to supply arms to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act.

The U.S. has maintained "strategic ambiguity" about what military actions it would take in the event China moved to take the self-governing island by force.

President Joe Biden, in Tokyo on May 23 during his first presidential visit to Japan, signaled an apparent end to that policy by saying the U.S. would defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion.

The U.S. "One China policy" acknowledges Beijing's claim over Taiwan but doesn't give China the right to take Taiwan by force, Biden said.

"We agree with the One China policy and all the attendant agreements we made, but the idea that it can be taken by force, just taken by force, would just not be appropriate," Biden said.

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MILITARY

Defense alleges US withheld evidence in 'Fat Leonard' case

By GREG MORAN

The San Diego Union-Tribune

As the jury in the "Fat Leonard" trial deliberates the fate of five former officers charged with bribery, defense lawyers made new allegations that federal prosecutors were improperly withholding evidence that could help their case.

In a motion filed June 17, lawyers for the five said they uncovered information that a federal agent who was key in the sprawling investigation of military contractor Leonard Glenn Francis, known as "Fat Leonard" for his immense size, made inaccurate statements in a sworn arrest warrant affidavit in a strikingly similar case a year ago.

At a brief court hearing Tuesday, lead prosecutor Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Pletcher did not address the accusations and told U.S. District Court Judge Janis Sammartino the government would write a response to the motion.

It is the latest allegation from defense lawyers about prosecutorial misconduct in the trial that began in February.

The defendants — former Rear Adm. Bruce Loveless; former Capt. David Newland, James Dolan and David Lausman; and former Cmdr. Mario Herrera — are charged with conspiracy, bribery and fraud. They are accused of accepting bribes from Francis and in return helping his Singapore-based ship servicing business, Glenn Defense Marine Asia, or GMDA. Francis pleaded guilty and admitted defrauding the government out of at least \$35 million.

The statements by Defense Criminal Investigative Services Special Agent Cordell DeLaPena came in the unrelated prosecution of Frank Rafaraci, the chief executive of Multinational Logistics Service, or MLS, which, like Francis' company, contracts with the U.S. Navy to service ships in foreign ports.

Rafaraci was initially charged in September 2021 with bribery of a Navy official and defrauding the government out of at least \$50 million through inflated invoices between 2011 and 2018.

In an affidavit for his arrest, DeLaPena made a series of incorrect statements regarding the fraudulent billing, according to court records in Rafaraci's case.

When defense lawyers for Rafaraci complained the statements were incorrect, lawyers for the Department of Justice agreed in a motion jointly filed with the defense in March that the statements were "factually inaccurate."

The DOJ took the unusual step of

then asking a federal judge to not only strike the complaint, but also remove the inaccurate affidavit from the official docket entirely. But the judge in the case declined to remove the affidavit and instead ordered the inaccurate paragraphs to be redacted.

Rafaraci, whose case was promoted by the DOJ as a major case of fraud that echoed the GDMA case, ended up being indicted on a single count of bribery. The fraud allegations were not part of the indictment. He pleaded guilty to the bribery charge in April and is awaiting sentencing.

The concession that DeLaPena had made inaccurate statements in the Rafaraci case was made in motions filed on March 23 in federal court in Washington, D.C., according to the court docket there.

DeLaPena testified in the Fat Leonard case in San Diego in April, but defense lawyers said in the motion filed Friday that prosecutors did not disclose the previous inaccurate statements to them.

Robert Boyce, the lawyer for Lausman, wrote in the latest motion that not disclosing the inaccurate statements before DeLaPena testified violated legal requirements that obligates prosecutors to hand over any information and evidence they have that can be favorable to the defense.

Lawyers for the other defendants joined in Boyce's motion, which argued that the information about DeLaPena's conduct in the Rafaraci case could have been used by defense lawyers to attack his credibility as a witness, and the entire investigation.

DeLaPena investigated the Fat Leonard case for a decade and testified that he had reviewed millions of documents, Boyce wrote.

"He testified he was intimately familiar with Mr. Francis' fraud scheme and had a deep understanding of the case against the defendants," he wrote.

DeLaPena had already come under scrutiny in the San Diego trial for his role in an effort to get foreign prostitutes, who the government said were provided to some of the officers at Francis' expense years ago, to come to San Diego to testify.

In an extraordinary mid-trial hearing called to determine if that information also had been improperly withheld from the defense, DeLaPena was mentioned in an email message between other agents as wanting to provide "reward money" to one of the women for testifying. The evidence included an email from DeLaPena in reply which said "\$\$ enroute."



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

U.S. Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa commander Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian passes the 3rd Air Force guidon to the unit's new commander Maj. Gen. Derek France, Wednesday at an assumption-of-command ceremony at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. At center is Command Chief Master Sergeant Heriberto Diaz.

3rd Air Force greets fighter pilot boss with experience in Europe, downrange

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The 32,000 American airmen in 3rd Air Force have a new boss, and he knows his way around the controls.

Maj. Gen. Derek France took the reins of the only numbered air force in USAFE-AFACRICA at a ceremony Wednesday.

The command is in capable hands with France, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa commander Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian said, citing his tactical experience as an F-15 and F-22 pilot and his operational knowledge.

France stepped into the role about a month after his predecessor, Lt. Gen. Randall Reed, left to

be second in charge at Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, where he also put on a third star.

A fighter pilot and U.S. Air Force Academy graduate, France will oversee 10 wings across two continents at a critical time for Europe and the NATO alliance, as Russia's war in Ukraine is about to enter its fifth month with no end in sight.

France vowed to continue "to prioritize people, our readiness, our posture and partnerships" while also defending the alliance.

"While the world has changed, 3rd Air Force will adapt and embrace those new realities," he said. "The needle will not move when it comes to the dedication,

readiness and resolve of our airmen."

France commanded an expeditionary wing at Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates and served as deputy director of operations for U.S. Central Command.

The past two years, he was assigned to Europe, where he was the director of operations for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration for USAFE-AFACRICA.

As a leader, France knows how to "collectively find the right balance" between executing the mission and taking "care of airmen and their families," Harrigian said.

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Elevator repairs at S. Korea base on hold

By DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Repairs to a dozen elevators out of order at Camp Humphreys, some in housing areas, are delayed by a three-to-five-month parts backlog, according to a post on the base Facebook page Tuesday.

The 351 elevators at Humphreys must conform to U.S. safety codes, which differ from South Korean codes, so repairs to the malfunctioning 12 may not include locally sourced parts, garrison commander Army Col. Seth Graves told Stars and Stripes by email Wednesday.

The Army Corps of Engineers is considering a waiver for local codes to obtain the necessary parts from a South Korean supplier, Graves said.

The world is still recovering from snarled global supply chains that arose from labor shortages and port and factory closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The malfunctioning elevators include one at the Army Lodge and several at the barracks and Army Family Housing, he said.

Even one inoperative elevator is a concern, and the base is ensuring every building has at least one functioning elevator, Graves said.

"At this time, no one should be required to use the stairs because there remain working elevators in each of these buildings," he said.

The only exception to the policy is one of the Army Family Housing buildings, which currently only has residents on the first floor.

Camp Humphreys, located about 40 miles south of Seoul, is the largest U.S. military base overseas, and has roughly 32,000 daily visitors. The base is headquarters for U.S. Forces Korea, Eighth Army, the 2nd Infantry Division and U.N. Command.

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PACIFIC

North Korean leader convenes military meeting

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is meeting with his senior military officials to discuss national defense policies and continuing his arms buildup following a highly provocative run in ballistic missile testing this year that revived tensions with Washington and Seoul.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday that Kim presided over a meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Military Commission that began Tuesday to review defense work during the first half of 2022 and confirm "crucial and urgent tasks" to expand military capabilities and implement key defense policies.

The report did not specify any plans or mention any critical remarks toward the United States or rival South Korea.

U.S. and South Korean officials have said in recent months that the North could be preparing to conduct its first nuclear test explosion since 2017 as Kim escalates brinkmanship aimed at cementing the North's status as a nuclear power and negotiating economic and security concessions from a position of strength.



AP

This photo provided by the North Korean government shows North Korean leader Kim Jon Un attending a meeting with his senior military officials at an undisclosed location on Wednesday.

KCNA said the commission's members started discussing the agenda that was presented, indicating the meeting may continue for days.

The members could discuss the progress in weapons development and plans to deploy some of the systems that were tested in recent months, including a purported hypersonic missile, a long-range cruise missile and the North's

newest intercontinental ballistic missile, said Cheong Seong-Chang, a senior analyst at South Korea's private Sejong Institute.

The North's ramped-up testing activity has come under a five-year arms development plan Kim announced in early 2021, when he revealed an extensive wish list of advanced military assets, including tactical nuclear weapons, nuclear-powered submarines, multi-

warhead missiles and solid-fuel, long-range weapons.

The meeting follows another major political conference earlier this month where Kim doubled down on his arms buildup in the face of what he described as an aggravating security environment and set forth further "militant tasks" to be pursued by his armed forces and military scientists.

North Korea has already set an

annual record in ballistic launches through the first half of 2022, firing 31 missiles in over 18 different launch events, including its first demonstrations of ICBMs in nearly five years.

South Korea's military also detected the North firing suspected artillery shells into sea last week.

Kim may up the ante soon as U.S. and South Korean officials say North Korea has all but finished preparations to detonate a nuclear device at its testing ground in the northeastern town of Punggye-ri.

The site had been inactive since hosting the North's sixth nuclear test in September 2017, when it said it detonated a thermonuclear bomb designed for its ICBMs.

The North's unusually fast pace in testing activity underscores Kim's dual intent to advance his arsenal and pressure the Biden administration over long-stalled nuclear diplomacy, experts say.

While the United States has said it would push for additional sanctions if North Korea conducts another nuclear test, the divisions between permanent members of the U.N. Security Council make the prospects for meaningful punitive measures unclear.

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EUROPE

Official: US must be in for long haul with Ukraine

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO's top official said Wednesday that the U.S. and other allies must be prepared to support Ukraine "for the long haul" in its war with Russia.

Failure to do so would embolden Russian President Vladimir Putin, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned at an event in Brussels hosted by Politico.

"If Putin gets his way by using military force against an independent, democratic nation in Europe, it will be a much higher (price) than the price we pay today to support Ukraine," Stoltenberg said ahead of a meeting of allied heads of state in Madrid.

Politico and other outlets reported in recent weeks that Germany, France and Italy were keen to hasten the end of the war, even if that re-

quired concessions to Putin. But on Wednesday, Stoltenberg squelched notions of an end to the fighting in the near term.

"I cannot tell you exactly how long this war will last," he said. "This is now turning into a war of attrition."

Next week, President Joe Biden and other NATO leaders will agree to a new NATO strategic concept that deals with threats posed by Russia and the military rise of China. Allies also will look to increase the number of troops positioned along NATO's eastern flank, Stoltenberg said. While exact details haven't been revealed, the plan could result in additional rotations to the Baltics, Poland or elsewhere for U.S. troops operating in Europe.

Meanwhile, the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war are expected to take center stage at the summit. To that end, allies will make

new commitments to Ukraine with a focus on helping it shift from Soviet-era weaponry to NATO gear, Stoltenberg said at Wednesday's event.

Also, anti-drone equipment and technology to enhance secure command-and-control communication are among the things allies will provide, Stoltenberg said.

Ukrainian officials have warned that much more will be needed to hold off Russia's push into the eastern part of the country, where artillery bombards cities around the clock.

For allies, the test going forward will be one of political endurance as the U.S. and other members spend billions of dollars getting increasingly sophisticated weaponry into the country.

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NATO/NATO

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg spoke Wednesday about Russia's war in Ukraine and the upcoming NATO summit in Madrid.

Microsoft: Russian cyber spying targets more than 40 Ukraine allies

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Coinciding with unrelenting cyberattacks against Ukraine, state-backed Russian hackers have engaged in "strategic espionage" against governments, think tanks, businesses and aid groups in 42 countries supporting Kyiv, Microsoft said in a report Wednesday.

"Since the start of the war, the Russian targeting (of Ukraine's allies) has been successful 29 percent of the time," Microsoft President Brad Smith wrote, with data stolen in at least one-quarter of the successful network intrusions.

Nearly two-thirds of the cyber-espionage targets involved NATO members. The United States was the prime target and Poland, the main conduit for military assistance flowing to Ukraine, was No. 2. In the past two months, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Turkey have seen stepped-up targeting.

A striking exception is Estonia, where Microsoft said it has detected no Russian cyber intrusions since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. The company credited Estonia's adoption of cloud com-



ANDY WONG/AP

A security surveillance camera is seen near the Microsoft office building in Beijing in 2021.

puting, where it's easier to detect intruders. "Significant collective defensive weaknesses remain" among some other European governments, Microsoft said, without identifying them.

Half of the 128 organizations targeted are government agencies and 12% are nongovernmental agencies, typically think tanks or humanitarian groups, according to the 28-page report. Other targets include telecommunications,

energy and defense companies.

Microsoft said Ukraine's cyber defenses "have proven stronger" overall than Russia's capabilities in "waves of destructive cyberattacks against 48 distinct Ukrainian agencies and enterprises." Moscow's military hackers have been cautious not to unleash destructive data-destroying worms that could spread outside Ukraine, as the NotPetya virus did in 2017, the report noted.

Ukraine expects EU-wide support for bloc candidacy

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A Ukrainian deputy prime minister overseeing the country's push to join the European Union said Wednesday that she's "100%" certain all 27 EU nations will approve making Ukraine a candidate for membership in the bloc during a summit this week.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Olha Stefanishyna said the decision could come as soon as Thursday, on the first day of the two-day EU leaders summit in Brussels.

Asked how confident she was that Ukraine would be accepted as an EU candidate, she said: "The day before the summit starts, I can say 100%."

Countries that had been skeptical — Stefanishyna cited the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark — about starting accession talks with Ukraine while it is fighting Russia's invasion are now supportive, she said.

The EU's executive arm threw its weight behind Ukraine's candidacy last week.

Stefanishyna described that decision as "a game-changer" and said unanimous support from the European Commission had cut ground from under "the legs of those most hesitating — not even skeptic — but hesitating countries."

"Most of the EU leaders have explained that there is a consensus already, so there's no like, no discussion about the consensus on Ukraine," she told The AP.

In another development, press freedom group Reporters Without Borders said a Ukrainian photojournalist and a soldier accompanying him appear to have been "coldly executed" during the first weeks of the war in Ukraine as they searched in Russian-occupied woods for a missing camera drone.

The group sent investigators to the woods north of the capital, Kyiv, where the bodies of Maks Levin and serviceman Oleksiy Chernyshov were found April 1.

The group said its team counted 14 bullet holes in the burned hulk of the pair's car and found litter seemingly left by Russian soldiers.

Tensions: Official says incident 'completely unacceptable'

FROM PAGE 1

olation of Estonian airspace by Russia this year, the ministry said. Last year, five such incidents occurred, it said.

But Estonian officials are sounding the alarm over the latest incursion, which comes amid high

tensions over Russia's unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war there.

Estonian officials said the Russian aircraft didn't file a flight plan or establish two-way radio communication with Estonian air traffic control, as air safety rules require.

The incident "undoubtedly causes additional tensions and is completely unacceptable," Tallinn said Tuesday.

News of the airspace violation comes on the heels of Kremlin threats to retaliate against fellow NATO member Lithuania unless the transit ban is lifted. Russia re-

lies on trains that travel through Lithuania to get supplies to Kaliningrad.

The items affected by the ban are subject to European Union sanctions, and officials shot down claims that Lithuania had acted unilaterally against Russia. They said the Baltic country coordinat-

ed its move with the EU.

At a NATO summit in Madrid next week, heads of state are expected to adopt a new strategy to address concerns about potential Russian aggression. The strategy is expected to involve an increase in troop levels along the alliance's eastern flank.

NATION



This photo provided by National Park Service shows West Entrance gate traffic on Wednesday at Yellowstone National Park in Montana.

AP

Yellowstone park reopens after changes due to flood

Associated Press

WAPITI, Wyo. — Hundreds of cars, trucks and recreational vehicles were backed up in long lines at entrances to Yellowstone National Park as it partially reopened Wednesday morning following record floods that reshaped the park's rivers and canyons, wiped out numerous roads and left some areas famous for their wildlife viewing inaccessible, possibly for months to come.

Park managers raised the gates at three of Yellowstone's five entrances for the first time since June 13, when 10,000 visitors were ordered out after rivers across northern Wyoming and southern Montana surged over their banks following a torrent of rainfall that accelerated the spring snowmelt. The cost and scope of the damage is still being assessed.

Some of the premier attractions at America's first national park will again be viewable, including Old Faithful — the legendary geyser that shoots towering bursts of steaming water almost like clockwork more than a dozen times each day.

But the bears, wolves and bison that roam the wild Lamar Valley and the thermal features around

Mammoth Hot Springs will remain out of reach. The wildlife-rich northern half of the park will be shuttered until at least early July, and key routes into the park remain severed near the Montana tourist towns of Gardiner, Red Lodge and Cooke City.

It's unknown how many visitors will show up in the flooding's immediate aftermath, but the lines indicate many tourists stuck to their plans despite uncertainty last week about when it would reopen. License plates at the east entrance near Wapiti, Wyo., indicated they were from Indiana, Arkansas, Ohio, Colorado, British Columbia in Canada and other places.

The first visitors going through didn't have to contend with other traffic, but they had to watch for marmots on the road.

Park managers had been bracing for throngs as the park celebrated its 150th anniversary a year after it tallied a record 4.9 million visits.

Muris Demirovic, 43, of Miami and his 70-year-old mother arrived at the east entrance at about 5:30 a.m. Wednesday and were second in a line of dozens of cars. He and his mother, who is from Bosnia, were on a cross country

trip visiting national parks and Yellowstone was at the top of their list.

However, when they arrived, it was closed due to flooding. Demirovic and his mother toured Cody, Wyo., went to a rodeo, walked some trails and visited a museum. They had planned to leave the Yellowstone area on Monday, but stayed when they learned the park would re-open this week.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime trip for me and my mom, so I had to make sure she sees this," he said.

To keep visitor numbers down while repairs continue, park managers will use a system that only allows cars with even-numbered last digits on their license plates to enter on even days, while vehicles with odd-numbered last numbers can come on odd days.

Groups of visitors traveling together in different cars are exempt from the license plate system as well as people with reservations at campgrounds and hotels in the park.

If traffic along the park's 400 miles of roads becomes unmanageable, Superintendent Cam Sholly said officials will impose a reservation system to enter the park.

IRS erasing last season's backlog

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service said Tuesday that it will have erased its backlog of last season's tax returns by the end of this week.

And with 143 million returns from this year's tax season processed so far, agency officials say there's a greater likelihood of being caught up on processing all returns by the end of this year.

The agency has faced a well-publicized backlog of tens of millions of tax returns and clogged customer service phone systems, which leaders have attributed to decades of underfunding and antiquated internal computer systems.

"To date, more than twice as many returns await processing compared to a typical year at this point in the calendar year, although the IRS has worked through almost a million more returns to date than it had at this time last year," the agency said in statement Tuesday.

Administering pandemic-related programs — including stimulus checks and advanced Child Tax Credit payments — imposed a new workload on the agency over the past two years.

That's on top of an IRS workforce that is the same size it was in 1970, though the U.S. population has grown exponentially and the U.S. tax code has become increasingly complicated.

A Treasury official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said agency employees have worked 500,000 overtime hours to bring down the backlog.

Agency officials have been asking Congress for increased funding for the agency.

During the 2020 budget year, the IRS processed more than 240 million tax returns and issued roughly \$736 billion in refunds, including \$268 billion in stimulus payments, according to the latest IRS data.

In that same time frame, 59.5 million people called or visited an IRS office.

Supreme Court rejects bid to stop Roundup lawsuits

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court has rejected Bayer's appeal to shut down thousands of lawsuits claiming that its Roundup weedkiller causes cancer.

The justices on Tuesday left in place a \$25 million judgment in favor of Edwin Hardeman, a California man who says he developed cancer from using Roundup for decades to treat poison oak, overgrowth and weeds on his San Francisco Bay Area property. Hardeman's lawsuit had served as a test case for thousands of similar lawsuits. The high court's action comes amid a series of court fights over Roundup that have pointed in different directions.

On Friday, a panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected an Environmental Protection Agency finding from 2020 that glyphosate does not pose a serious health risk and is "not likely"

to cause cancer in humans. The appellate court ordered the EPA to reexamine its finding.

At the same time, Bayer has won four consecutive trials in state court against people who claimed they got cancer from their use of Roundup. The latest verdict in favor of the pharmaceutical company came last week in Oregon. Bayer had argued that federal regulators repeatedly determined its products are safe and lawsuits based on claims under state laws should be dismissed.

In a statement, Bayer said it disagreed with the Supreme Court's decision not to take up its case. "The company believes that the decision undermines the ability of companies to rely on official actions taken by expert regulatory agencies, as it permits every U.S. state to require a different product label" in conflict with federal laws, Bayer said.

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NATION

Jan. 6 takeaways: Trump's playbook, 'hateful' threats

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House select committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection is turning to former President Donald Trump's pressure campaign on state and local officials to overturn his 2020 election loss.

In its fourth hearing this month, the panel examined how Trump focused on a few swing states, directly urging officials to decertify President Joe Biden's victory or find additional votes for himself. It was part of a larger scheme that also involved dozens of lawsuits, pressure on Department of Justice officials and, eventually, lobbying Vice President Mike Pence to reject Biden's win at the congressional electoral count on Jan. 6.

"Pressuring public servants into betraying their oaths was a fundamental part of the playbook," the committee's chairman, Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, said of Trump and his allies. "And a handful of election officials in several key states stood between Donald Trump and the upending of American democracy."

'They did their jobs'

The panel is keeping to a tight narrative as it makes its case to the American public that Trump's efforts to overturn his defeat directly led to the violence at the Capitol on Jan. 6, when hundreds of his supporters broke into the Capitol and interrupted the certification of Bi-

den's victory.

The witnesses at Tuesday's hearing were all public officials who were directly lobbied by Trump or who received threats for doing their jobs after Trump persuaded millions of his followers — with no evidence — that he had actually won, not lost, the election.

Arizona's Republican state House Speaker Rusty Bowers, who testified in person, spoke about phone calls from Trump and his allies asking him to decertify Arizona's legitimate electors and replace them. Bowers said he repeatedly asked Trump's attorneys to show evidence of widespread fraud, but they never provided any.

"You are asking me to do something against my oath, and I will not break my oath," Bowers said he told them. He recalled John Eastman, a chief architect of Trump's plan to create slates of fake electors, telling him to "just do it and let the courts sort it out."

Bowers also responded to Trump's comments, released in a statement before the hearing, claiming he had told the president that the Arizona election was rigged. "I did have a conversation with the president," Bowers said. "That certainly isn't it."

Other state officials told similar stories in videotaped testimony. Pennsylvania House Speaker Bryan Cutler said he got repeated calls from Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani and other Trump aides, but



MICHAEL REYNOLDS/AP

Wandrea "Shaye" Moss, a former Georgia election worker, testifies as her mother, Ruby Freeman, listens during the Tuesday hearing of the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. Moss testified about how her life has been turned upside down after Trump and his lawyer Rudy Giuliani spread false conspiracy theories that she and her mother were engaging in ballot fraud. Moss told of receiving "hateful," racist and violent threats, including one that said, "Be glad it's 2020 and not 1920."

he refused to answer them. The calls continued even after Cutler asked them to stop.

Focus on Georgia

Trump's pressure was most intense in Georgia, where Biden narrowly won after years of GOP presidential victories in the state. Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and his deputy, Gabe Sterling, testified about becoming two of the president's top targets as he floated conspiracy theories and as they refused to back down to his pressure.

The committee played audio of the call where Trump asked the officials there to "find 11,780" votes that could flip the state to prevent Biden's election victory.

"There were not votes to find," Raffensperger said.

Raffensperger said he and his team went through "every single allegation" and down every "rab-

bit hole" that Trump and his allies presented to state election officials. But Trump wouldn't accept it. He told Raffensperger that it could only be dishonesty or incompetence that they couldn't find the necessary amount of votes. Competing against Trump's false statements was like a "shovel trying to empty the ocean," said Sterling, who spoke out publicly against Trump's pressure in the weeks after the election. Sterling said he couldn't convince even some of his own family members that the election outcome was valid.

Threats to officials

The hearing also examined how Trump's threats put state officials in danger.

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson talked about how her "stomach sunk" when she heard the sounds of protesters outside her home one night after the

election when she was putting her child to bed. She wondered if they had guns or were going to attack her house. "That was the scariest moment," not knowing what's going to happen, Benson said.

Another Michigan official, Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey, told the committee about receiving 4,000 text messages after Trump published his phone number online. Cutler, the Pennsylvania House speaker, said his information was also revealed online, prompting protesters to show up at his house when his 15-year-old son was home alone.

Arizona's Bowers told stories of people outside his house on loudspeakers and one man with a gun who verbally threatened his neighbor. He teared up as he spoke of his daughter, who he said was "gravely ill," and his wife becoming upset as people swarmed outside.

Panel in possession of new Trump documentary footage

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New footage of former President Donald Trump and his inner circle taken both before and after Jan. 6, 2021, is now in the possession of the House committee investigating the deadly attack on the Capitol.

The revelation of the never-before-seen footage came to light Tuesday amidst the committee's public hearings when British filmmaker Alex Holder revealed he had complied with a congressional subpoena to turn over all of the footage he shot in the final weeks of Trump's 2020 reelection campaign.

"When we began this project in September 2020, we could have never predicted that our work would one day be subpoenaed by

Congress," Holder wrote in a statement on Twitter.

The filmmaker said the footage includes exclusive interviews with Trump, his children and then-Vice President Mike Pence while on the campaign trail as well as before and after the insurrection on the Capitol.

The first senior leaders of the Trump campaign heard about the documentary was Tuesday morning when the project was first reported by Politico, according to two former officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the group's reaction.

The series, which has been titled "Unprecedented," had been purchased by a streaming service and was scheduled to be released in three parts this summer.

Thursday's Jan. 6 hearing to explore 'the effort to corrupt the Justice Department'

BY ANUMITA KAUR
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The House hearing investigating the catalysts behind the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol will continue Thursday and is expected to explore then-President Donald Trump's efforts to pressure the Justice Department in the days after the election.

The hearing will examine Trump's "attempt to corrupt the country's top law enforcement body, the Justice Department, to support his attempt to overturn election," House select committee Chairman Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said during his closing remarks at Tuesday's hearing.

"Just as we heard today that Donald Trump was deeply involved in the scheme to pressure state of-

officials to overturn the election results, we will hear on Thursday that Donald Trump was also the driving force behind the effort to corrupt the Justice Department," Thompson said.

Thursday's hearing will be led by Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., and will feature testimony from Richard Donoghue, who served as the acting U.S. deputy attorney general from December 2020 to January 2021.

Former Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey Clark is alleged to have repeatedly pushed his colleagues in the Justice Department to investigate new theories about election fraud and asked the department to instruct some states to "decertify" the results. Trump considered installing Clark as at-

torney general over acting Atty. Gen. Jeff Rosen, who said there was no evidence of fraud that could sway the election. Donoghue, in a deposition clip shown at the end of Tuesday's hearing, said he would have instantly resigned if Trump did so.

The Jan. 6 committee hearings, which had been scheduled to wrap up Thursday, may stretch well into the summer.

"The original hearings would have wrapped up in June, but we are picking up new evidence on a daily basis with enormous velocity, and so we're constantly incorporating and including the new information that's coming out," committee member Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., told reporters after Tuesday's hearing.

NATION

Senators reach deal on gun violence bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate bargainers reached agreement Tuesday on a bipartisan gun violence bill, potentially teeing up final passage by week's end on an incremental but landmark package that would stand as Congress' response to mass shootings in Texas and New York that shook the nation.

Lawmakers released the 80-page bill nine days after agreeing to a framework for the plan and 29 years after Congress last enacted major firearms curbs. It cleared an initial procedural hurdle by 64-34, with 14 Republicans joining all 48 Democrats and two allied independents in voting yes. That strongly supported a prediction by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., of approval later this week. Passage by the Democratic-led House could follow quickly.

Though Republicans blocked tougher restrictions sought by Democrats, the accord marks an election-year breakthrough on an issue that pits the GOP's staunch gun-owning and rural voters against Democrats' urban-centered backers of firearms curbs. That makes it one of the most incendiary culture war battlefields



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, arrives to meet with Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., for bipartisan talks on how to rein in gun violence, at the Capitol in Washington on June 15.

in politics and a sensitive vote for some lawmakers, particularly Republicans who might alienate Second Amendment stalwarts.

The legislation would toughen background checks for the youngest firearms buyers, require more sellers to conduct background checks and beef up penalties on gun traffickers. It also

would disburse money to states and communities to improve school safety and mental health initiatives. Aides estimated the measure would cost around \$15 billion, which Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut, the lead Democratic bargainer, said would be fully paid for.

Resolving one final hurdle that

delayed the accord, the bill would prohibit romantic partners convicted of domestic violence and not married to their victims from getting firearms. Convicted abusers who are married to, live with or had children with their victims are already barred from having guns.

The compromise prohibits guns for a person who has "a current or recent former dating relationship with the victim." That is defined in part as one between people "who have or have recently had a continuing serious relationship of a romantic or intimate nature." An offender's ability to own a gun could be restored after five years if they've not committed another serious crime.

On another late dispute, the bill would provide \$750 million to the 19 states and the District of Columbia that have "red flag" laws making it easier to temporarily take firearms from people adjudged dangerous, and to other states with violence prevention programs. States with "red flag" laws that receive the funds would have to have legal processes for the gun owner to fight the firearm's removal.

Momentum in Congress for gun legislation has a history of waning

quickly after mass shootings. Lawmakers are scheduled to begin a two-week July 4th recess by this weekend.

The legislation lacks far more potent proposals that President Joe Biden supports and Democrats have pushed unsuccessfully for years, derailed by GOP opposition. These include banning assault-type weapons or raising the minimum age for buying them, prohibiting high-capacity magazines and requiring background checks for virtually all gun sales.

Yet after 10 Black shoppers were killed last month in Buffalo, N.Y., and 19 children and two teachers died days later in Uvalde, Texas, Democrats and some Republicans decided that this time, measured steps were preferable to Congress' usual reaction to such horrors — gridlock.

Murphy said that after Buffalo and Uvalde, "I saw a level of fear on the faces of the parents and the children that I spoke to that I've never seen before." He said his colleagues also encountered anxiety among voters "not just for the safety of their children, but also a fear about the ability of government to rise to this moment and do something, and do something meaningful."



ERIN WOODIEL/AP

Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg reacts to the successful vote to impeach and remove him from office on Tuesday at the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre, S.D.

South Dakota AG convicted on 2 impeachment charges

Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. — The South Dakota Senate on Tuesday convicted Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg of two impeachment charges stemming from a 2020 fatal crash, removing and barring him from future office in a stinging rebuke that showed most senators didn't believe his account of the crash.

Ravnsborg, a first-term Republican who only recently announced he wouldn't seek reelection, showed little emotion as senators convicted him first of committing a crime that caused someone's death. They then delivered another guilty verdict on a malfeasance charge that alleged

he misled investigators and misused his office.

Ravnsborg told a 911 dispatcher the night of the crash that he might have struck a deer or other large animal and has said he didn't know he struck a man — 55-year-old Joseph Boever — until he returned to the scene the next morning. Criminal investigators said they didn't believe some of Ravnsborg's statements, and several senators made clear they didn't either.

"There's no question that was a lie," said Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, the chamber's top-ranking Republican. "This person ran down an innocent South Dakotan."

Civil jury in LA finds Bill Cosby sexually abused teenager in 1975

Associated Press

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Jurors at a civil trial found Tuesday that Bill Cosby sexually abused a 16-year-old girl at the Playboy Mansion in 1975.

The Los Angeles County jury delivered the verdict in favor of Judy Huth, who is now 64, and awarded her \$500,000. She said the fact that jurors believed her story meant more than the sum of money or the fact that she didn't win punitive damages.

"It's been torture," Huth said of the seven-year legal fight. "To be ripped apart, you know, thrown

under the bus and backed over. This, to me, is such a big victory."

Jurors found that Cosby intentionally caused harmful sexual contact with Huth, that he reasonably believed she was under 18, and that his conduct was driven by unnatural or abnormal sexual interest in a minor.

The jurors' decision is a major legal defeat for the 84-year-old entertainer once hailed as America's dad.

It comes nearly a year after his Pennsylvania criminal conviction for sexual assault was thrown out and he was freed from prison.

Huth's lawsuit was one of the last remaining legal claims against him after his insurer settled many others against his will.

Cosby did not attend the trial or testify in person, but short clips from 2015 video deposition were played for jurors, in which he denied any sexual contact with Huth. He continues to deny the allegation through his attorney and publicist.

Cosby spokesman Andrew Wyatt said they would appeal the verdict and he claimed the defense won because Huth didn't win punitive damages.

Colbert: Staffers guilty of 'first-degree puppetry'

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Stephen Colbert pronounced his staff members who were arrested at a congressional office building last week as guilty of "first-degree puppetry," and lashed out at those comparing the incident to the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot.

That includes Fox News Channel's Tucker Carlson, who in a tongue-in-cheek monologue about "Insurrection 2.0" on Monday called Colbert a "white ex-

tremist."

Seven people who identified themselves as affiliated with CBS' "Late Show" were detained by Capitol Police following reports of a disturbance at the Longworth House Office Building last Thursday night. The seven include Robert Smigel, the voice of Triumph the Insult Comic Dog.

Colbert said on his show Monday night that they were doing "some last-minute puppetry and

jokey make-'em-ups" when they were taken into custody. He said it was not surprising.

"The Capitol Police are much more cautious than they were 18 months ago, and for a very good reason," he said. "And if you don't know what the reason is, I know what news network you watch."

Colbert said everyone involved was calm and professional.

He offered no apologies for the incident.

NATION

Britt wins tumultuous Alabama Senate race

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Katie Britt won the Republican nomination for Senate in Alabama on Tuesday, defeating six-term Rep. Mo Brooks in a primary runoff after former President Donald Trump took the unusual step of rescinding his initial Brooks endorsement.

The loss ends a turbulent campaign that pit Brooks, a conservative firebrand who has spent more than a decade in Congress, against someone who has never held elected office. Brooks ran under the banner “MAGA Mo” and fully embraced Trump’s election lies. But that wasn’t enough for the former president, who initially backed Brooks in the race to replace Britt’s former boss, retiring Sen. Richard Shelby, but then pulled his support as Brooks languished in the polls.

The race was among a handful of contests held Tuesday at the midpoint of a primary season that has been shaped by Trump’s effort to influence the GOP.

By the time Trump backed her earlier this month, Britt was already considered the favorite in the race. She emerged as the top vote-getter in the state’s May 24 primary, but just missed the threshold that triggered a runoff. Still, Tuesday’s result gives Trump a win at a time when his influence over the GOP has come under scrutiny.

The former president has had a mixed record of success in backing candidates this election season, helping lift Senate contenders in Pennsylvania and Ohio while floundering elsewhere, particularly in Georgia. Voters in the onetime Republican stronghold rejected his efforts to unseat the state’s GOP governor and secretary of state, both of whom rebuffed his extraordinary pressure to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. And his trouble in the cru-



BUTCH DILL/AP

U.S. Republican Senate candidate Katie Britt celebrates with her family after securing the nomination during a runoff against Mo Brooks on Tuesday in Montgomery, Ala.

cial swing state deepened Tuesday as two of his endorsed congressional candidates faltered in their GOP run-off elections.

In the 6th District in Atlanta’s northern suburbs, emergency room physician Rich McCormick beat Trump-backed lawyer Jake Evans. And in the 10th District east of Atlanta, trucking company owner Mike Collins bested Democrat-turned-Republican Vernon Jones.

Trump persuaded Jones to run for the seat and drop his long-shot bid for governor to clear the field for his chosen candidate, former Sen. David Perdue. Perdue lost to Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, who endorsed Collins. The seat is being vacated by Republican Rep. Jody Hice, who also lost his bid to unseat Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, another top

Trump target.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser won the Democratic nomination to serve another term, fending off a pair of challengers amid concerns over rising crime and homelessness.

But the Alabama Senate runoff had drawn particular attention because of the drama surrounding Trump’s endorsement and because the winner, who will face Democrat Will Boyd in November, is considered the overwhelmingly favorite in the Republican state.

Britt, 40, cast herself as part of a new generation of conservative leaders while disparaging Brooks, 68, as a career politician. If victorious in November, Britt will be the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from Alabama and one of its youngest members.

The state’s previous female senators had been appointed.

“Alabama has spoken. We want new blood. We want fresh blood,” she said at her victory party. “We want someone who will fight for Christian conservative values, who will fight for the freedoms and liberties this nation was founded on and will fight for the American dream for the next generation and the next generation.”

That argument seemed to resonate with some voters Tuesday.

“She’s young. She’s smart,” said 86-year-old Carolyn Bowman. “That’s what we need in Congress.”

Brooks, who is known for his bombastic oratory style, described the race as a battle for the soul of the Republican Party, pitting the “true conservative” wing against establishment members of the GOP. He disparaged Britt, 40, as a RINO — the GOP pejorative meaning “Republican in name only” — and maintained he was the only one with a proven conservative record.

The founding member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, Brooks has a history of bucking party leadership and made his opposition to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell a pillar of his campaign, embarking on a “Fire McConnell Tour” of town halls.

In his concession speech Tuesday night, Brooks told supporters he respected the race’s outcome. But in a sign of the contentious race, he accused voters of having been seduced by false advertising and congratulated high-dollar donors and “special interest groups” for funding Britt’s campaign.

“We are sending to Washington, D.C., the exact opposite of what we need in the United States Senate. But the voters have spoken. They might not have spoken wisely,” he groused.

Nguyen to face Raffensperger for Georgia secretary of state

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia Democrats chose state Rep. Bee Nguyen as their nominee for secretary of state, a position that assumed new importance after former President Donald Trump cast doubt on Georgia’s 2020 election results by making false claims of widespread voter fraud.

Nguyen defeated former state Rep. Dee Dawkins-Haigler in the primary runoff Tuesday and is set to challenge Republican incumbent Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger in November’s general election.

The significance of the position was highlighted by Raffensperger’s appearance as a witness Tuesday before the U.S. House Jan. 6 committee.

“For the first time in our state’s history, an Asian American woman is going to be a nominee on a statewide ticket,” Nguyen, the daughter of Vietnamese immi-

grants, told supporters Tuesday night. “The question that I’ve been asked as I’ve been on this campaign trail for 14 months has been, ‘Will Georgians vote for an Asian candidate?’ The answer is yes, Georgians will.”

Meanwhile, Republicans had no statewide runoffs but were voting in four congressional races. Trump had endorsed candidates in two of those races and both were defeated.

The secretary of state’s race was the most high-profile of four Democratic statewide runoffs, with nominees also being selected for lieutenant governor, labor commissioner and insurance commissioner.

Trump targeted Raffensperger after the 2020 general election for failing to overturn his narrow loss in the state.

Raffensperger — who won the praise of some Democrats for refusing to bend to pressure from

the former president — dispatched a challenge from a Trump-endorsed primary challenger without being forced into a runoff.

With Trump and his allies pushing false claims of widespread voter fraud in Georgia, Nguyen highlighted her work in the General Assembly to debunk false narratives and stand up for voting rights.

“We will remind Georgians that Brad Raffensperger ain’t our friend and we deserve better,” Nguyen told supporters. “We deserve a secretary of state who will uphold the law and protect our freedom to vote. We can have both, y’all.”

She has served in the state House since winning a 2017 special election to succeed Stacey Abrams in a district that includes parts of the city of Atlanta and is vice chair of the state Democratic Party.



BEN GRAY/AP

Georgia state Rep. Bee Nguyen, center, celebrates Tuesday in Atlanta after winning a runoff election to be the Democratic candidate for Georgia Secretary of State.

Abrams, who endorsed Nguyen in the runoff, is seeking the Democratic nomination for governor af-

ter narrowly losing the election to Republican Gov. Brian Kemp in 2018.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

High-capacity ammo magazines ban to begin

WA EVERETT — Starting July 1, the sale of ammunition magazines with more than 10 rounds will be banned in Washington state. Importing, manufacturing and distributing them will be outlawed, too.

The only magazines allowed for sale and importing will be those with a maximum capacity of 10 cartridges under a measure pushed through by Democrats and signed by Gov. Jay Inslee earlier this year, the Everett Herald reported.

Washington residents can continue buying larger magazines until the law takes effect. Any owned as of July 1 are unaffected by the law.

Ex-paramedic sentenced for assaults in ambulances

MS PASCAGOULA — A former Mississippi paramedic was sentenced to 40 years in prison without parole, weeks after he pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting patients in ambulances as they were being taken to hospitals.

James Lavelle Walley, 57, of Leakesville, apologized to his victims during his sentencing hearing, the Sun Herald reported.

Walley pleaded guilty May 9 to three counts of sexual battery and two counts of touching a child for lustful purposes.

District Attorney Angel Myers McIlrath said Walley committed the crimes between 2016 and 2019 while working as a certified paramedic for ASAP Ambulance. The company serves patients in Alabama and Mississippi, and it fired him.

Each time the assaults occurred in an ambulance, Walley was in the back, the ambulance drivers did nothing to intervene and they denied knowledge of the attacks, court records showed.

Child stabbed in chest by catfish barb

FL NEW PORT RICHEY — A child was stabbed in the chest by a barb from a catfish during a fishing trip, sheriff's officials in Florida said.

The child's mother began driving toward a hospital but stopped in New Port Richey and called 911 when the child started having difficulty breathing, Pasco County Fire Rescue officials said on Twitter.

Firefighters discovered the barb was embedded 1 to 1½ inches in the child's chest, according to the agency's spokesman, Corey Dierdorff. The child was then airlifted to St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa.

Dierdorff told news outlets he did not know how or where the child was stung, or what kind of catfish it was.

Catfish have spines and stingers on their fins and the underside of



RUSS DILLINGHAM, SUN JOURNAL (LEWISTON, MAINE)/AP

Fruits of their labor

Sierra Thomas of Harpswell, Maine, shows off a strawberry she just picked as her nephew, Landon Harris of Gardiner, Maine, reaches around to drop one he picked into her container at Chipman Farm U-pick Strawberries in Minot, Maine.

their bodies. Because of this, anglers are cautious around catfish, but Dierdorff said he had never heard of anything like this incident.

Firework causes small fire at stadium

GA ATLANTA — A firework from a nearby display hit a gutter at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz stadium and caused a small fire, city fire officials said.

A fire inspector on standby at the stadium during the fireworks show noticed some smoke and flames coming from the stadium's roofline and contacted dispatch, according to a news release from the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department.

Fire trucks arrived within minutes and saw a small amount of smoke and fire along the roof on the north side of the stadium. Firefighters used an aerial ladder and extinguished all visible flames with a single water extinguisher, the release says.

Contest decides state's official birthday cake

WV CHARLESTON — West Virginia now has

an official birthday cake.

The state's first lady, Cathy Justice, recently announced the winner of her West Virginia Birthday Cake Contest. It came during the celebration of the state's 159th birthday.

Kim Wymer of Scott Depot was named the grand prize winner, according to a news release. Her recipe — "Ms. Van's Blackberry Skillet Cake" — becomes the official birthday cake of West Virginia.

It will be served annually on June 20 to commemorate the anniversary of West Virginia's statehood.

In addition to her recipe becoming the official birthday cake, Wymer also won a \$500 gift card, a custom cake platter and was awarded a certificate as the contest's grand prize winner.

Starving pelicans released after rehabilitation

CA NEWPORT BEACH — A dozen of the hundreds of brown pelicans found starving on the Southern California coast were released recently after rehabilitation at a wildlife center.

The pelicans were returned to the wild at Corona del Mar State

Beach after treatment at the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center in Huntington Beach. They were among about 70 that have been brought to the center since mid-May, said Dr. Elizabeth Wood, the facility's veterinarian.

"They were all brought in in a state of emaciation," Wood said. "They were basically starving."

"We don't have a clear answer as to what caused this," she said.

Teen charged with arson in barn fire

MD PYLESVILLE — A 15-year-old boy was charged with arson after a large barn fire that caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage, Maryland fire officials said.

Firefighters were dispatched to Onion Road in Pylesville for reports of a 50-foot by 100-foot barn ablaze, the Office of the State Fire Marshal said in a news release. The barn and its contents are considered a complete loss with damages estimated to be over \$750,000, officials said.

Investigators determined that the fire was set intentionally and charged the teen with second-degree arson, first-degree malicious burning, and malicious destruction of property.

The teen was released to the custody of his parents and referred to the Department of Juvenile Services.

81 sea turtle nests on shore is up from 2021

NC MANTEO — There are more sea turtle nests on a portion of North Carolina's Outer Banks this season than at the same time last year, officials said.

An update from Cape Hatteras National Seashore says there have been 81 nests laid this season, including a Leatherback nest, which officials said was the first since 2012. There were 70 nests at the same time last year, according to the update.

Healthy sea turtle populations are important indicators of healthy ocean habitats, the National Park Service said. They help to maintain balance in oceanic food webs by keeping the populations of their prey, such as jellyfish and mollusks in check as well as enhancing rates of nutrient cycling.

All sea turtle species are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

WORLD

1,000 dead, 1,500 injured in Afghan quake

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A powerful earthquake struck a rural, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan early Wednesday, killing 1,000 people and injuring 1,500 more, according to a state-run news agency. Officials warned that the already grim toll would likely rise.

Information remained scarce on the magnitude 6.1 temblor near the Pakistani border, but quakes of that strength can cause severe damage in an area where homes and other buildings are poorly constructed and landslides are common. Experts put the depth at just 6 miles — another factor that could increase the impact.

The disaster posed a major test for the Taliban-led government, which seized power last year as the U.S. planned to pull out from the country and end its longest war, two decades after toppling the same insurgents in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

Rescuers rushed to the area by helicopter Wednesday, but the response is likely to be complicated since many international aid agencies left Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

Neighboring Pakistan's Meteorological Department said the quake's epicenter was in Afghanistan's Paktika province, some 31

miles southwest of the city of Khost. Buildings were also damaged in Khost province, and tremors were felt as far away as the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.

Footage from Paktika showed men carrying people in blankets to waiting helicopters.

Others were treated on the ground. One resident could be seen receiving IV fluids while sitting in a plastic chair outside the rubble of his home and still more were sprawled on gurneys. Some images showed residents picking through clay bricks and other rubble from destroyed stone houses, some of whose roofs or walls had caved in.

The death toll given by the Bakhtar News Agency was equal to that of a quake in 2002 in northern Afghanistan that struck immediately after the U.S.-led invasion overthrew the Taliban government.

Those are the deadliest since 1998, when a 6.1 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tremors in Afghanistan's remote northeast killed at least 4,500 people.

In most places in the world, an earthquake of this magnitude wouldn't inflict such extensive devastation, said Robert Sanders, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey.

But a quake's death toll more of-



In this photo released by a state-run news agency Bakhtar, Afghans evacuate wounded after an earthquake Wednesday in the province of Paktika, eastern Afghanistan. AP

ten comes down to geography, building quality and population density.

"Because of the mountainous area, there are rockslides and landslides that we won't know about until later reporting. Older buildings are likely to crumble

and fail," he said. "Due to how condensed the area is in that part of the world, we've seen in the past similar earthquakes deal significant damage."

Earlier, the director-general of state-run Bakhtar news agency, Abdul Wahid Rayan, wrote on

Twitter that 90 houses have been destroyed in Paktika and dozens of people are believed trapped under the rubble. The Afghan Red Crescent Society had sent some 4,000 blankets, 800 tents and 800 kitchen kits to the affected area, he added.

Sri Lanka leader says economy 'has collapsed'

Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka's debt-laden economy has "collapsed" after months of shortages of food, fuel and electricity, its prime minister told lawmakers Wednesday, in comments underscoring the country's dire situation as it seeks help from international lenders.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament the South Asian country is "facing a far more serious situation beyond the mere shortages of fuel, gas, electricity and food. Our economy has completely collapsed."

While Sri Lanka's crisis is considered its worst in recent memory, Wickremesinghe's assertion that the economy has collapsed did not cite any specific new developments. It appeared intended to emphasize to his critics and opposition lawmakers that he has inherited a difficult task that can't be fixed quickly, as the economy founders under the weight of heavy debts, lost tourism revenue and other impacts from the pandemic, as well as surging costs for commodities.

Lawmakers of the country's two main opposition parties are boy-



ERANGA JAYAWARDENA / AP

Scooterists and motorists wait in long queues at a fuel station in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on June 11.

cotting Parliament this week to protest against Wickremesinghe, who became prime minister just over a month ago and is also finance minister, for not having delivered on his pledges to turn the economy around.

Wickremesinghe said Sri Lanka is unable to purchase imported fuel, even for cash, due to heavy debts owed by its petroleum corporation.

Israel steps toward dissolving parliament

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli lawmakers voted in favor of dissolving parliament in a preliminary vote on Wednesday, setting the wheels in motion to send the country to its fifth national election in just over three years.

The motion was the first step in a series of votes before the formal disbanding of the government. It came two days after Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced he was disbanding his unraveling governing coalition of eight ideologically diverse parties just over a year after he took office.

The historic coalition, which un-

seated longtime leader Benjamin Netanyahu, was wracked by infighting and defections in recent months. It included dovish parties committed to a two-state solution with the Palestinians, hawkish ultranationalists who oppose a Palestinian state, and a small Islamist faction, the first Arab party to join a government.

A series of proposals for dissolving parliament were passed by a vast majority of the 120 members of Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

But a final vote on at least one of the motions is still required in order to dissolve parliament, and that vote is expected to be held

next week.

Once it passes, Bennett will step down as prime minister and hand over the reins to his ally, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. New elections are expected to be held in October.

Bennett and Lapid formed their coalition of parties united solely in their opposition to Netanyahu last year after four inconclusive elections in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Parliament was deadlocked between those who supported a Netanyahu-led government and those who refused to join forces with him while he was under indictment for corruption.

Dutch farmers clog roads on way to protest

Associated Press

STROE, Netherlands — Thousands of farmers gathered in the central Netherlands Wednesday to protest against the Dutch government's plans to rein in emissions of nitrogen oxide and ammonia, driving their tractors across the Netherlands and snarling traffic on major highways.

The protest was organized earlier this month after the government published nationwide targets for reducing emissions,

sparking anger from farmers who claim their livelihoods — and those of thousands of people who work in the agricultural service industry — are on the line.

Calling it an "unavoidable transition," the government mandated reductions in emissions of up to 70% in many places close to protected nature areas and as high as 95% in other places.

The government has been forced to act after courts in recent years began blocking per-

mits for infrastructure and housing projects because the country was missing its emissions targets.

By early afternoon, many had arrived at a green field in the small agricultural village of Stroe, about 45 miles east of the capital, Amsterdam, where a stage was set up for speakers to address the crowd and music blared out of speakers while children bounced in a giant inflatable pig.

WORLD

Thousands flock to Stonehenge to mark summer solstice

Associated Press

LONDON — Thousands of druids, pagans and New Age revelers greeted the summer solstice at Stonehenge on Tuesday, the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

About 6,000 people gathered at the ancient stone circle in southern England to watch the sun rise at 4:49 a.m. on a clear, crisp morning, local police said.

It was the first time revelers have been permitted to gather at the Neolithic monument to celebrate the solstice since 2019. The sunrise was streamed online in 2020 and 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

navirus pandemic.

The crowds raised their arms in the air and cheered as the sun rose over the horizon. Some performed pagan rituals and sang songs, and many hugged the ancient stones as part of the ceremony. Plenty of others woke up early and made the trip there just to soak up the atmosphere.

Police said the ambiance was “convivial” and there were only two arrests — one for assault and one for drug possession.

English Heritage, which looks after Stonehenge among around 400 historic sites, said 170,000 people around the world also watched

the solstice online on Tuesday.

“We’re so delighted to have been able to welcome people back this year and also to livestream the occasion to thousands of people right around the world,” said Nichola Tasker, English Heritage’s director of Stonehenge.

Stonehenge was built between 5,000 and 3,500 years ago on a windswept plain in southwest England by a sun-worshipping Neolithic culture. Experts still debate its purpose, but it is aligned so that on summer solstice, the sun rises behind the Heel Stone and rays of sunlight are channeled into the center of the circle.



ANDREW MATTHEWS, PA/AP

Arthur Uther Pendragon, center, joins people as they gather at the Heel Stone during sunrise for the summer solstice festivities at Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England, on Tuesday.

Hong Kong’s iconic Jumbo Floating Restaurant capsizes at sea

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong’s iconic Jumbo Floating Restaurant has capsized in the South China Sea less than a week after it was towed away from the city, its parent company said Monday.

The restaurant encountered “adverse conditions” Saturday as

it was passing the Xisha Islands, also known as the Paracel Islands, in the South China Sea, and water entered the vessel and it began to tip, according to Aberdeen Restaurant Enterprises Ltd.

The company said nobody was injured, but efforts to save the vessel failed and it capsized Sunday.

In a statement, the company said it “is very saddened by this accident.”

The Jumbo Floating Restaurant closed in 2020 due to the pandemic and laid off all its staff. Aberdeen Restaurant Enterprises said the restaurant became a financial burden to its shareholders, with mil-

lions of Hong Kong dollars spent on its inspection and maintenance even though it was not in operation.

The restaurant was towed away last Tuesday. The company said it planned to move it to a lower-cost site where maintenance could be carried out.

It said that prior to its departure, the vessel had been thoroughly inspected by marine engineers and hoardings were installed, and all relevant approvals were obtained.

“The company is now getting further details of the accident from the towing company,” the statement said.

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OPINION

Prosecute Trump to preserve republic

BY LAURENCE H. TRIBE,
PHILLIP ALLEN LACOVARA
AND DENNIS AFTERGUT

Los Angeles Times

In a powerful warning Thursday, the patron saint of the conservative legal movement, former federal appellate Judge J. Michael Luttig, testified before the Jan. 6 Committee and pronounced former President Donald Trump and his allies a “clear and present danger” to American constitutional democracy. As Luttig knows better than most, this historic phrase generates an extraordinary constitutional power of government to act — and a duty to do so.

Luttig’s verdict should be understood as a plea for Attorney General Merrick Garland to proceed toward charging Trump with federal crimes that the public record now amply establishes. Only then will this nation be able to move forward from the ongoing insurrection.

Beyond the avalanche of documents and testimony pointing to Trump’s guilt and the principle that no one is above the law, there is an additional reason to indict Trump for his multi-faceted conspiracy in 2020 to override the vote. Upon a conviction for inciting insurrection, or being an accessory to insurrection, Trump would be subject to disqualification from acquiring federal office.

Section 3 of the 14th Amendment directs: “No person shall ... hold any office ... under the United States ... who, having previously taken an oath ... as an officer of the United States ... to support the Constitution shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same.”

There is ample evidence that Trump’s objective was the insurrection’s success. Among that evidence was his three-hour delay in calling on the attackers to go home and his vengeful tweet demeaning Vice President Mike Pence after Trump knew that the savage invasion of the U.S. Capitol had begun. That was “pouring gasoline on the fire,” testified former deputy White House press secretary Sarah Matthews.

Even without a direct charge of insurrection, allegations of such insurrectionist activities in an indictment for conspiring to defraud the United States or to obstruct an official proceeding or for seditious conspiracy might suffice for 14th Amendment disqualification if Trump were convicted.

Holding Trump accountable — and disqualifying him from future office — would not be a partisan act, but one needed to preserve the republic.

Without a prosecution of Trump, here are three things that seem sure to happen if he were allowed to run again and either be lawfully elected or succeed in installing himself in office despite defeat in the electoral college, as he attempted to do in 2020:

■ The end of elections in which a majority of voters choose their leaders: As Luttig put it at Thursday’s hearing: The clear and present danger now is because “to this very day the former president and his allies and supporters pledge that in the presidential election of 2024, if the former president or his anointed successor as the Republican Party presidential candidate were to lose that election, they would attempt to overturn that 2024 election in the same way that they attempted to overturn the 2020 election.”

Republican-controlled state legislatures are already institutionalizing election sabotage — with GOP election officials determining election results no matter the vote winner. More than a dozen “election deniers” like Jim Marchant, who just won the Republican primary for secretary of state in Nevada, are GOP nominees for secretary of state and other election-controlling positions.

So even though Trump won’t hold the levers of presidential power in 2024 the way he did in 2020, he won’t need to: His allies and his disinformation are putting officials in place around the country who will certify his win whatever the vote.

■ The use of the military for domestic control: Trump’s administration deployed military helicopters in an unprecedented show of military force over peaceful dem-

onstrators whom police attacked in Washington’s Lafayette Park in July 2020. Retired military leaders excoriated the abuse.

In early December 2020, Trump’s close ally, his former national security adviser and retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, reportedly urged Trump to declare martial law.

On Nov. 9, 2020, Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper and installed a more compliant Christopher Miller. On Jan. 4, 2021, Miller issued a memo requiring his approval to deploy the National Guard in Washington, D.C. On Jan. 6, Defense Department leadership delayed the National Guard’s response to the Capitol siege by three hours.

You don’t have to be a clairvoyant to imagine how military force against political foes — and restraint of force to protect violent supporters — will be used if Trump regains office.

■ The end of accountability: On June 17, in Nashville, Trump said that if reelected, he would consider “very, very seriously” pardoning all the participants in the Jan. 6 insurrection.

That could clear more than 310 insurrectionists who have pleaded guilty or been convicted at trial. Deterrence of future violence depends on judicially imposed sanctions. Trump would remove them, signaling that violent extremism in defense of Trump is no vice.

If he returns to the White House, he will install his people in the Justice Department and turn the machinery of prosecution against his enemies and toward protecting his friends and his schemes.

And should Trump get an encore, look to pre-World War II Germany for a mirror. A failed coup in 1923 taught Hitler a better route to dictatorship nine years later.

Those who repeat history are doomed to learn it. The hard way.

Laurence H. Tribe is professor emeritus of constitutional law at Harvard. Phillip Allen Lacovara was deputy solicitor general of the United States, counsel to the Watergate special prosecutor, and argued the case of United States vs. Nixon. Dennis Aftergut is a former federal prosecutor, currently of counsel to Lawyers Defending American Democracy.

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Afghan families in the US, severed and in pain

Washington Post editorial

The trauma of Ukraine’s millions of migrants fleeing carnage, thousands of whom have arrived in the United States, cannot be cause for American amnesia concerning the plight of Afghan refugees. The fact that this country has resettled tens of thousands of Afghans in the past year is a credit to the Biden administration. But the work is not done.

U.S. forces managed to board more than 76,000 Afghans on evacuation flights last summer as they fled the pandemonium of Kabul’s sudden fall to the Taliban. That airlift, despite the backdrop of an embarrassingly chaotic military withdrawal, was a stunning display of U.S. ingenuity, resources and resolve.

But even as Washington has continued arranging for Afghans to depart their country and be granted admission here — nearly 10,000 have arrived since the fall — thousands more who aided the U.S. war effort, and their immediate family members, have been left behind. Those severed families — children, husbands and wives wrenched apart

during the turmoil of the sudden U.S. exit — were the subject of a heart-rending article by The Washington Post’s Abigail Hauslohner. It was a timely reminder of this country’s unpaid moral debt to a cohort of people whose lives have been torn asunder, and in many cases endangered, in the aftermath of the two-decade-long U.S. presence in Afghanistan.

Those separated from their families include some 1,400 Afghan children who have arrived in the United States without their parents. They include Afghans who worked directly for U.S. agencies and with the U.S. military, as well as their spouses, children and grandchildren. They include others whose livelihoods — with nongovernmental organizations or the media, for example — were possible only because of the U.S. security presence, and whose continued employment and safety may now be permanently jeopardized.

It’s true that extracting people from Afghanistan is difficult and dangerous work. For those who want to leave, even to be reunited with their immediate family, the task is infinitely more complicated than simply booking a flight out of Kabul. It’s also the case

that U.S. officials have continued to work on getting Afghans out, including roughly 350 who have been arriving weekly in this country for the past two months.

That’s not nothing; it’s also not enough.

As The Post reported, the Biden administration has not established any systematic process by which to proactively identify and assist resettled Afghans in the United States who remain separated from their family members, many or most of whom remain in Afghanistan. No easy-to-access official channel is available through which such information can be transmitted to the State Department, the Pentagon or the Department of Homeland Security. Why not?

Advocates for the refugees believe the number of severed Afghan families based partly in the United States numbers in the tens of thousands.

And while major questions remain about the long-term immigration status of Afghans already in this country — problems Congress could address by granting them a path to citizenship — easing procedures for reuniting those families is a separate matter, and a far more urgent one.

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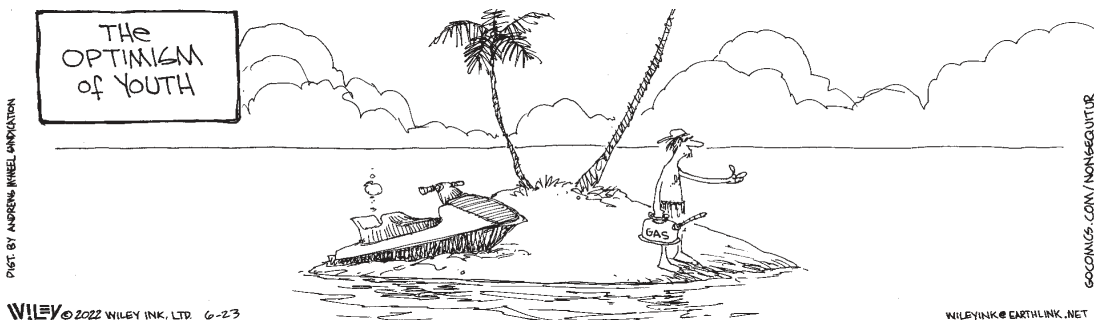
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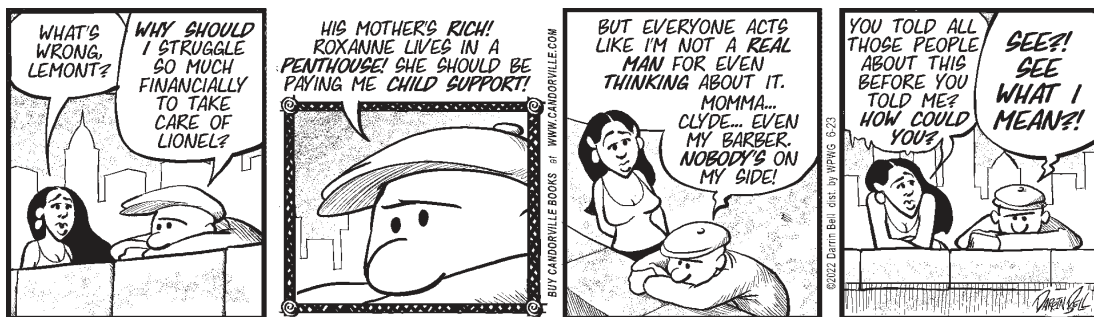
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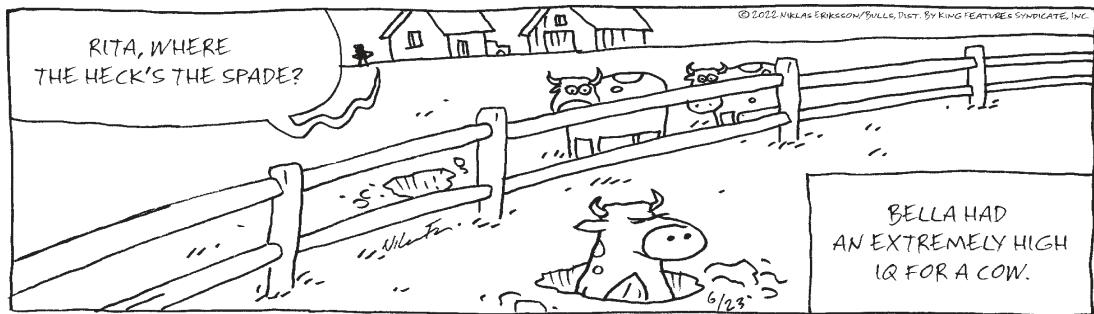
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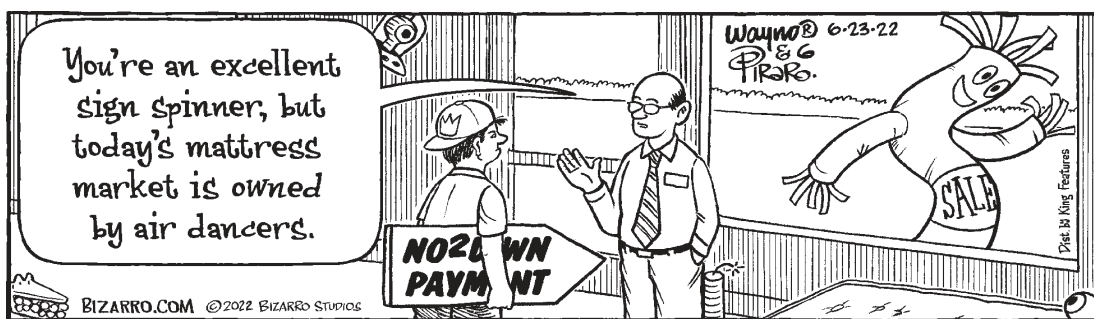
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- 4 Sudan neighbor
- 8 Blend
- 12 100 percent
- 13 Honolulu's isle
- 14 Sheltered
- 15 Liquid lumps
- 17 Catches some rays
- 18 Balloon filler
- 19 Biblical peak
- 21 Tabby temptation
- 24 Hankering
- 25 St. crosser
- 26 Scoundrel
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- 10 Sultry Horne
- 11 He loved Lucy
- 16 Crib
- 20 French salt
- 21 Mafia boss
- 22 Declare
- 31 Low digits
- 33 Prematurely
- 35 Diarist Anaïs
- 38 Zilch
- 40 Long-eared hound
- 43 Toy bricks
- 45 Train alternative
- 46 Suggestive
- 47 "Carmen" solo
- 48 Shredded cabbage dish
- 49 Slender
- 53 Buckeyes' sch.
- 54 Night before
- 55 "Diamonds" singer

Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	G	G		D	A	F	T		E	M	I	T
D	U	O		I	N	R	E		L	E	N	S
I	R	A		S	T	A	N	D	B	A	C	K
T	U	L	I	P		T	I	O				
				J	O	D	I		S	W	A	T
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I	C	U		E	A	R	N	S		A	L	A
N	E	R	O		S	I	D	E	K	I	C	K
D	R	E	S		S	O	M	E				
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6-23

CRYPTOQUIP

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JOIIVJ KET FANVC FBUV

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EJAOIC QABIQ "FVVG FVVG!"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I DON'T REMEMBER EVERYTHING ABOUT THAT FAD FROM SO MANY YEARS AGO, BUT IT'S VOGUELY FAMILIAR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals V

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FACES

‘Obi-Wan’ stars chat with US service members

By KELLY AGREE
Stars and Stripes

Fans of the Star Wars franchise at military bases around the world quizzed the stars of “Obi-Wan Kenobi,” Ewan McGregor and Hayden Christensen, at a USO event recently.

McGregor plays the title role and Christensen his former student and eventual nemesis Anakin Skywalker in the TV series streaming on Disney+. From Kadena Air Base, Japan, someone asked Christensen how it felt to reprise Skywalker’s alter ego, Darth Vader.

“All of the feelings and emotions that it brought up for me, getting to come back to this character after all of this time has been a huge deal and putting the Vader costume back on for the first time, it is hard to put into words, but it was just an incredible thing,” Christensen said.

During the global virtual chat June 15, McGregor and Christensen spoke to military members and their families at 166 mil-



McGregor

Christensen

itary installations across Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, Guam, Germany, Kuwait, South Korea, Bahrain, Spain, Belize, New Zealand, Norway, Iraq and 46 states.

At Naval Base Guam, the USO served Star Wars-themed foods: a Death Star cake, Millennium Falcon waffles and Dark Side coffee. U.S. Southern Command in Florida also held a Star Wars party with an R2D2 display in the middle of its table.

At Camp Geiger, N.C., a stadium full of

Marines let loose a booming ‘Ooh-rah,’ as they greeted the stars.

“That’s amazing,” Christensen said after hearing the battle cry.

This chapter of the Star Wars story takes place 10 years after the movie “Star Wars: Episode III — Revenge of the Sith.” The plot revolves around the downfall of Christensen’s character, who turned to the Dark Side as Sith Lord Darth Vader.

McGregor first played the venerable Obi-Wan in “Star Wars: Episode I — The Phantom Menace” in 1999.

“In the last 17 years I’ve made so many movies and played different roles,” McGregor said. “So, to come back to a role that you’ve known and loved, it is interesting to do that. Especially with something like Star Wars where you could sense over the years that there was such a hunger for it.”

USO Kadena manager Micah Taylor explained the base mission of supporting fighter aircraft, which sparked McGregor’s interest. His brother Colin McGregor

served in the Royal Air Force for 20 years.

“My older brother was a Tornado fighter pilot in the Royal Air Force,” McGregor said. “So, I’m sure from him he would like to pass his wishes to you guys over there.”

The program closed with words of thanks from both men.

“I want to thank all of you for your service and everything that you guys do every day,” Christensen said. “We get to play these incredible characters, but you guys are the real heroes, so it is a real honor and privilege to get to be here and share this time with you. So, thank you for everything you do.”

McGregor echoed his costar’s sentiment.

“I want to say thank you for your service and I know that whatever branch in the military you are in that you are working incredibly hard for the betterment of all of us here,” McGregor said. “We really appreciate what you do on a daily basis, and I hope that you stay safe and stay strong.”

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Cristela Alonzo shares life improvements in Netflix comedy special

By KELLI SKYE FADROSKI
The Orange County Register

After two decades of stand-up comedy, Cristela Alonzo said she’s finally joined the ranks of the middle class.

The 43-year-old Texas native, who currently lives in Los Angeles, shared the hardships she and her family faced growing up in poverty in her first Netflix special, “Lower Classy,” in 2016. And now, Alonzo said she’s upgraded to “Middle Classy,” her new Netflix comedy special hitting the streaming platform worldwide on June 28.

“It was all starting during writing ‘Lower Classy,’ where I was barely breaking into this level of life that I wasn’t used to,” Alonzo said during a recent phone interview. “Being able to take care of yourself is a whole different level than just getting by, and that’s a lesson I had to learn. That’s the difference between lower and middle classy.”

Alonzo made history for being the first Latina to create, produce and star in her own prime-time ABC sitcom, “Cristela,” which aired during the 2014-2015 season. Two years later, she was the first Latina to voice a lead character in a Disney/Pixar film when she starred as Cruz Ramirez in the “Cars 3” animated feature. Throughout her career, she’s broken several barriers and said she hopes she’s inspiring others to do the same within their own lives.

“It’s incredible, and also hard to believe, that

you’re the first at something,” she said. “I haven’t been the first one in this career, but it’s weird to think about how many firsts we still have to make across the board. Look, we haven’t had a female president. There’s so many of those things that you’d think would’ve happened by now. The thing about being the first is that you hope that the first shows people that it shouldn’t be the last. It means we are now here; We now have a seat at the table.”

She’s come a long way since she started doing stand-up 20 years ago while working an office job at the Addison Improv in Dallas. Early in life, she learned to deal with difficult situations using humor. She turned to comedy following the death of her mother in 2002. She had served as her primary caretaker for several years and once she passed, Alonzo said she was stuck in Dallas without work. She fudged her résumé a bit to land the job at the Improv but soon found herself telling jokes on the stage.

“The more I saw the comics, I realized so many of them were really talking about their own experiences and being very personal and talking about difficult things,” she recalled. “I realized, Wait, I can’t afford to talk to [a therapist] about the struggle of losing my mother, so I started writing jokes about my mom. That’s how I got started doing stand-up. From there, it just evolved and I always told myself that I would stop doing it when it stopped being fun; It just hasn’t stopped being fun.”

Fox, Weir, Warren set to receive honorary Oscars

Los Angeles Times

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will present multiple film luminaries with honorary Oscars this November: director Peter Weir, composer Diane Warren and filmmaker Euzhan Palcy. Actor Michael J. Fox will receive the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (also an Oscar statuette). Academy President David Rubin said these Oscars would celebrate the recipients’ “indelible contributions to cinema and the world at large.” The awards will be conferred at the academy’s 13th Governors Awards on Nov. 19 in Los Angeles.

Fox, who starred in the hit sitcoms “Family Ties” and “Spin City,” appeared in such well-known films as “Doc Hollywood,” “The American President” and the iconic “Back to the Future” trilogy. His honors include five Emmys, two SAGs and a Grammy Award.

Fox was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson’s disease after showing symptoms in 1991 when he was only 29. He established the Michael J. Fox Foundation, whose work has included the Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative, an effort that includes 33 clinical sites in 11 countries and 1,400 participants, according to the foundation’s website.

The academy says the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award is given “to an individual in the motion picture arts and sciences whose humanitarian efforts have brought credit to the industry.”

The academy describes the honorary award, being conferred upon Weir, Warren and Palcy, as honoring “extraordinary distinction in lifetime achievement, exceptional contributions to the

state of motion picture arts and sciences, or for outstanding service to the Academy.”

Highly regarded Australian director Weir’s works include the Oscar-nominated films “Witness,” “Green Card,” “Dead Poets Society,” “The Truman Show” and “Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World.” He emerged as a leading figure of the Australian New Wave movement in the ’70s with “Picnic at Hanging Rock,” “The Last Wave,” “Gallipoli” and “The Year of Living Dangerously.” He has received six Oscar nominations personally.

Warren is one of the best-known composers of contemporary movie songs, racking up 13 Oscar nominations (thus far without a win in the original song category) to go with her Grammy and Emmy awards, nine Billboard Hot 100 No. 1s and the feat of being the first person to log seven simultaneously charting songs, each with different artists. Among her Oscar-nominated works: “I Don’t Want to Miss a Thing,” “How Do I Live,” “Because You Loved Me” and “Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now.”

Palcy is a Cesar-winning filmmaker originally of Martinique, French West Indies. She collected the Cesar for best first film for her debut, “Sugar Cane Alley” (1983). She has been honored several times at the Venice Film Festival and received the Sojourner Truth Award at Cannes in 2001. To American audiences, she is best known for writing and directing “A Dry White Season,” starring Donald Sutherland, Susan Sarandon and Marlon Brando. Brando reportedly worked on the film for scale, coming out of retirement to participate in the anti-Apartheid movie.

MLB

ROUNDUP

Paredes hits 3 HRs to top Yanks

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Isaac Paredes homered in his first three at-bats and the Tampa Bay Rays beat the Yankees 5-4 on Tuesday night, handing New York only its third loss in 20 games.

Paredes combined with Harold Ramirez for back-to-back homers in the first off Nestor Cortes, then put the Rays ahead 3-2 in the third and added a two-run drive in the fifth on the first pitch after Clarke Schmidt relieved.

It was just the second multihomer game for Paredes, who hit two against Detroit on May 18. He was hit by a pitch from Ron Marinaccio in the seventh.

“The adrenaline was definitely saying that I should hit another homer,” Paredes said through a translator.

Tampa Bay had lost eight of its previous 10 games.

The Rays acquired the 23-year-old from Detroit on April 4 for outfielder Austin Meadows. Paredes is hitting .209 with eight homers and 16 RBIs, and 10 of his last 13 hits have been for extra bases.

This was the seventh time a Tampa Bay player hit three homers after Jonny Gomes, B.J. Upton, Evan Longoria (twice), Travis d’Arnaud and Brandon Lowe — the latter two against the Yankees.

“That’s what made it very special,” Paredes said. “It’s always a tough series against the Yankees and so it’s very important to win against them. With the series that we’ve been having up to this, I’m just glad we were able to get a victory out of this.”

Royals 12, Angels 11 (11): Shohei Ohtani hit two three-run homers and drove in a career-high eight runs, but Whit Merrifield led off the 11th inning with an RBI double and visiting Kansas City hung on to beat Los Angeles.

Ohtani crushed a 423-foot homer in the sixth and a game-tying, 438-foot shot in the ninth, giving him the biggest RBI game of his five-year stateside career. The AL MVP then set the single-game major league record for RBIs by a Japanese-born player with a sacrifice fly in the 11th inning.

But Ohtani’s eighth RBIs weren’t enough after Merrifield and Kyle Isbel drove in runs off Jose Quijada (0-2) earlier in the 11th.

Daniel Mengden struck out Mike Trout with two Angels on base before Ohtani’s flyout, and he retired Jared Walsh on a game-ending popup as Kansas City held on for its fifth victory in six games despite blowing a five-run lead in the sixth and a three-run lead in the ninth.

Carlos Santana had four hits and drove in a season-high five runs for the Royals, while rookie Bobby Witt Jr. had his first multi-homer game while driving in a career-high four runs.

Guardians 6, Twins 5 (11): Andrés Giménez had an RBI single in the 11th inning and visiting Cleveland moved into the AL Central lead, percentage points ahead of Minnesota.

With Oscar Gonzalez on second, Giménez singled to center field with one out and the Guardians improved to 10-2 in their last 12 games and 16-4 since May 30.

Trevor Stephan (3-2) struck out Carlos Correa, Max Kepler and Gary Sanchez, Minnesota’s 3-4-5 hitters, with two on and nobody out in the 10th.

Astros 8, Mets 2: Yordan Alvarez hit a two-run homer and Kyle Tucker had three RBIs as host Houston beat New York in an interleague



CHRIS O’MEARA/AP

The Rays’ Isaac Paredes, right, celebrates with Yandy Diaz after Paredes hit a two-run home run during the fifth inning against the Yankees on Tuesday. It was his third homer of the game.

matchup between two of the top teams in the majors.

Jose Altuve and José Siri added solo home runs for Houston in the first meeting between the teams since the Astros swept a three-game series in September 2017.

Giants 12, Braves 10: Mike Yastrzemski broke out of a slump with a go-ahead two-run double in the sixth inning, Joc Pederson and Austin Wynns homered and visiting San Francisco beat Atlanta.

Yastrzemski drove a pitch from Collin McHugh to right that put the Giants up for good at 8-7. San Francisco has won eight of 11 and 14 of 22.

Cardinals 6, Brewers 2: Nolan Gorman went 4-for-4 with two solo homers and four RBIs as visiting St. Louis moved into a share of the NL Central lead with Milwaukee.

Gorman broke a 2-all tie with a homer to center off Chi Chi González (0-1) in the fourth inning. He extended the lead to 4-2 with a drive over the right-field wall against Miguel Sánchez in the seventh.

Rangers 7, Phillies 0: Nathaniel Lowe and Jonah Heim hit consecutive homers off former teammate Kyle Gibson, Martín Pérez went six innings in his fifth scoreless start this season and host Texas beat Philadelphia.

Dodgers 8, Reds 2: Tony Gonsolin became the first pitcher in the majors to win nine games, Freddie Freeman drove in five runs and visiting Los Angeles beat Cincinnati.

Gonsolin (9-0) gave up two runs on solo homers by Jonathan India and Albert Almora Jr. but only allowed one other hit through five innings and 87 pitches. The 28-year-old righty has a 1.58 ERA.

White Sox 7, Blue Jays 6 (12): Josh Harrison hit a game-ending single with two outs in the 12th inning and host Chicago topped Toronto.

Luis Robert matched a career high with four RBIs and made a sliding grab in center field in the top of the 12th, helping the White Sox win for the sixth time in eight games. The reigning AL

Central champions returned to .500 for the first time since May 29.

Mariners 8, Athletics 2: Julio Rodríguez, Jesse Winker and Eugenio Suárez hit consecutive homers in the seventh inning and visiting Seattle beat Oakland.

Red Sox 5, Tigers 4: Trevor Story hit a three-run homer out of Fenway Park, Christian Vázquez added a solo shot and Boston beat Detroit.

Boston went ahead 4-3 in the fourth when Story put a hanging slider from rookie Beau Brieske (1-6) on Lansdowne Street for his 11th homer this season.

Pirates 7, Cubs 1: Bligh Madris hit his first major league home run and fellow rookie Roansy Contreras pitched five solid innings to lead host Pittsburgh past Chicago.

Madris hit a solo shot to right-center field off Mark Leiter Jr. in the sixth inning to close the scoring.

Marlins 9, Rockies 8: Garrett Cooper lined a tiebreaking double in the eighth inning, and host Miami overcame a four-run deficit to beat Colorado.

Colorado led 4-0 before Miami scored five times in the fourth and three in the fifth to take an 8-5 lead. The Rockies tied the score 8-8 in the sixth after Cooper allowed Brendan Rodgers’ two-out grounder to get by him and into right field for an error that led that led to three unearned runs.

Nationals 3, Orioles 0: Erick Fedde allowed two hits in six innings, and visiting Washington beat Baltimore for its second straight victory following an eight-game skid.

César Hernández doubled on the game’s first pitch and scored on a double by Nelson Cruz to put Washington in front.

Padres 3, Diamondbacks 2 (11): Jorge Alfaro singled home the winning run with one out in the 11th inning to give host San Diego a victory over Arizona.

Eric Hosmer hit a tying homer in the sixth for the Padres.

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	50	18	.735	—
Toronto	38	30	.559	12
Boston	38	31	.551	12½
Tampa Bay	37	31	.544	13
Baltimore	30	39	.435	20½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	35	28	.556	—
Minnesota	38	31	.551	—
Chicago	33	33	.500	3½
Detroit	26	42	.382	11½
Kansas City	25	42	.373	12
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	42	25	.627	—
Texas	32	35	.478	10
Los Angeles	33	38	.465	11
Seattle	30	39	.435	13
Oakland	23	46	.333	20
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	45	25	.643	—
Atlanta	39	30	.565	5½
Philadelphia	36	33	.522	8½
Miami	30	36	.455	13
Washington	25	46	.352	20½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	39	31	.557	—
St. Louis	39	31	.557	—
Pittsburgh	28	39	.418	9½
Chicago	25	43	.368	13
Cincinnati	23	44	.343	14½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	41	25	.621	—
San Diego	43	27	.614	—
San Francisco	38	29	.567	3½
Arizona	32	38	.457	11
Colorado	30	38	.441	12
Tuesday’s games				
Washington 3, Baltimore 0				
Tampa Bay 5, N.Y. Yankees 4				
Boston 5, Detroit 4				
Texas 7, Philadelphia 0				
Houston 8, N.Y. Mets 2				
Cleveland 6, Minnesota 5, 11 innings				
Chicago White Sox 7, Toronto 6, 12 innings				
Seattle 8, Oakland 2				
Kansas City 12, L.A. Angels 11, 11 innings				
L.A. Dodgers 8, Cincinnati 2				
Pittsburgh 7, Chicago Cubs 1				
Miami 9, Colorado 8				
San Francisco 12, Atlanta 10				
St. Louis 6, Milwaukee 2				
San Diego 3, Arizona 2, 11 innings				
Wednesday’s games				
N.Y. Mets at Houston				
Toronto at Chicago White Sox				
Philadelphia at Texas				
Washington at Baltimore				
Detroit at Boston				
N.Y. Yankees at Tampa Bay				
Cleveland at Minnesota				
Seattle at Oakland				
Kansas City at L.A. Angels				
Arizona at San Diego				
Colorado at Miami				
L.A. Dodgers at Cincinnati				
Chicago Cubs at Pittsburgh				
San Francisco at Atlanta				
St. Louis at Milwaukee				
Thursday’s games				
Cleveland (Plesac 2-4) at Minnesota (Smeltzer 3-1)				
Seattle (Ray 6-6) at Oakland (Montas 3-7)				
Houston (Valdez 7-3) at N.Y. Yankees (Taillon 8-1)				
Baltimore (Kremer 1-1) at Chicago White Sox (Cueto 1-3)				
Colorado (Freeland 3-5) at Miami (Garrett 1-2)				
San Francisco (Wood 5-5) at Atlanta (Wright 7-4)				
Chicago Cubs (Steele 2-5) at Pittsburgh (Quintana 1-4)				
L.A. Dodgers (Kershaw 4-1) at Cincinnati (Greene 3-7)				
St. Louis (Hudson 5-3) at Milwaukee (Alexander 1-0)				
Philadelphia (Suárez 5-4) at San Diego (Musgrove 8-0)				
Friday’s games				
Houston at N.Y. Yankees				
Boston at Cleveland				
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay				
Washington at Texas				
Baltimore at Chicago White Sox				
Colorado at Minnesota				
Oakland at Kansas City				
Toronto at Milwaukee				
Seattle at L.A. Angels				
Detroit at Arizona				
N.Y. Mets at Miami				
L.A. Dodgers at Atlanta				
Chicago Cubs at St. Louis				
Philadelphia at San Diego				
Cincinnati at San Francisco				

NHL



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Colorado Avalanche right wing Valeri Nichushkin, center, celebrates after scoring against the Tampa Bay Lightning during the first period of Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final on Saturday in Denver.

Nichushkin dominating for Avs in Stanley Cup Final

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Valeri Nichushkin stood in front of a poster of Alex Ovechkin hoisting the Stanley Cup on the eve of his first trip to the Final and remembered what it was like to witness that moment.

"That was fun to watch when Ovi win it, especially when he celebrated," he said. "I think that was one of the best things."

One thing better for Nichushkin would be hoisting hockey's holy grail himself.

"I hope so," he said. "We'll see."

Nichushkin and the Colorado Avalanche are two wins away from doing just that, and the big Russian winger is a big reason why they took a 2-1 lead over the back-to-back defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning into Game 4 on Wednesday. He was tied for the team lead in goals with three, set up Andre Burakovsky for his overtime winner in the series opener and scored in Game 3 before it was called back for an oh-so-close offside.

He has consistently been the best player on the ice in the Final, hounding the puck, forcing turnovers and creating offense.

"He's built for this time of year," coach Jared Bednar said. "Big, long, strong, fast, tenacious, hungry, relentless on the puck, finishing off the chances he gets. He can play with top guys. You can move him up and down the lineup, plays power play, penalty kill. I mean, I don't know what else to say about the guy."

Nichushkin, who hasn't spoken to reporters since the series be-

NHL scoreboard

Stanley Cup Final
Best-of-seven; x-if necessary
Colorado 2, Tampa Bay 1
Colorado 4, Tampa Bay 3, OT
Colorado 7, Tampa Bay 0
Monday: Tampa Bay 6, Colorado 2
Wednesday: at Tampa Bay
Friday: at Colorado, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT
x-Sunday, June 26: at Tampa Bay, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Monday CET; 9 a.m. Monday JKT
x-Tuesday, June 28: at Colorado, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT

gan, has been a pest on defense, as usual, but has added some offense that was missing for much of his playoff career in the NHL.

Over his first 28 postseason games with the Dallas Stars and Avalanche, Nichushkin had just one goal and two assists. That included a 25-game goal drought.

This postseason, he is among Colorado's goal-scoring leaders with eight, trailing just Nathan MacKinnon and Gabriel Landeskog. Nichushkin has received Selke Trophy votes for the league's top defensive forward each of the past three seasons, but this offensive evolution is a development even his coach didn't see coming.

"I'm a little bit surprised at where he's gotten to with his game," Bednar said before describing why he perhaps shouldn't be so surprised. "I'll be cutting video after a game, trying to get some work done to lighten the load for the next morning and I'll be the last one there, the trainers are leaving and I'll be walking out of the room and I'll see Val walk out of the room. He's just

getting done lifting. That's just the type of guy he is."

That strength has been obvious on the ice early in the Final, outmuscling Lightning players to get to good scoring areas and winning board battles to get the puck back.

Defenseman Josh Manson remembers playing against Nichushkin while with Anaheim and just how much of a struggle he was to deal with.

"It feels like he's way more consistent with it now," Manson said. "He fits in the structure so well. He forechecks so hard. He's such a big, strong guy. He's lanky and he just constantly puts you under pressure and he's strong enough to turn the puck over."

So strong teammate J.T. Compher referred to Nichushkin as "a horse." Physically, yes, but he has also shown smarts, like shaking free of a defender to be in place for his power-play goal that jumpstarted a 7-0 rout in Game 2.

In a lot of ways, Nichushkin fit the bill for what Colorado was looking for to augment the flashy skill of MacKinnon, Landeskog, Mikko Rantanen and Cale Makar. His offense is almost a bonus after all he has done for the Avalanche in three seasons.

"The system that we play, what we sort of demand of our players on the defensive side of it, is a huge strength of Val's," Bednar said. "And he's obviously a big, long, strong guy that can skate and sort of fits our mold playing a high-pace, north game and the battles, the races that he can win, I think it just kind of fits his style. He's found his place here."

Leafs' Matthews wins Hart Trophy

Rangers' Shesterkin wins Vezina as top goalie

BY FRED GOODALL
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Toronto's Auston Matthews won the Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player on Tuesday night, becoming only the third Maple Leaf to win the award and the first since Ted Kennedy in 1954-55.

The 24-year-old forward received 119 first-place votes in voting by the Professional Hockey Writers Association and finished well ahead of Edmonton's Connor McDavid and Igor Shesterkin of the New York Rangers for the honor presented during the NHL Awards Show.

"I can't lie, it feels really good. ... It's pretty special," Matthews said, though he conceded there were some bittersweet feelings about accepting the award in Tampa, where the two-time defending champion Lightning and Colorado Avalanche will meet in Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final on Wednesday.

"There is some angst, wishing you were still playing," Matthews said.

Shesterkin claimed the Vezina Trophy as the league's top goaltender. Colorado's Cale Makar took the Norris Trophy, presented to the league's best defenseman, and Detroit's Moritz Seider claimed the Calder Trophy as the top rookie.

Matthews became the first player to score 60 goals since Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos did it 10 years ago, helping the Maple Leafs (54-21-7, 115 points) set franchise records for wins and points. Toronto lost to the two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Lightning in the first round of the playoffs.

The Maple Leafs star, who posted career bests with 46 assists and



DERIK HAMILTON/AP

Toronto center Auston Matthews is the third Maple Leaf to win the Hart Trophy.

106 points, also took home the Ted Lindsay Award as most outstanding player in the regular season, an honor determined by voting by members of the NHL Players Association.

Shesterkin became the third Rangers goalie in the past 40 years to win the Vezina, joining Henrik Lundqvist (2011-12) and John Vanbiesbrouck (1985-86). He went 36-13-4 with an NHL-best 2.07 goal-against-average and .935 save percentage before leading a playoff run that ended against Tampa Bay in the Eastern Conference finals.

Seider is the first Red Wings player to win the Calder Trophy since goalie Roger Crozier during the 1964-65 season. He led all first-year defensemen with 50 points and finished ahead of Toronto's Michael Bunting and Anaheim's Trevor Zegras in balloting for the award.



CHRIS O'MEARA / AP

The New York Rangers' Igor Shesterkin took home the Vezina Trophy on Tuesday as the top goaltender.

NBA DRAFT

TOP BIG MEN

Jalen Duren, Memphis

The 6-11, 250-pound freshman is just 18 years old but has impressive athleticism and strength.

Strengths: Duren has the solidly built frame to bang for position and the athleticism to finish lobbs above the rim, making him ESPN's No. 10 overall draft prospect. He averaged 12.0 points and 8.1 rebounds, proving effective in attacking the rim and running the floor.

Duren also showed flashes of relentless rebounding ability by pulling down 20 rebounds against UCF in the American Athletic Conference Tournament and 19 against Western Kentucky in November. And he averaged 2.1 blocks.

"I've gotten better, my body has gotten better," Duren said. "And honestly I'm looking just to continue to develop throughout my rookie year, coming in being one of the younger draftees."

Concerns: He didn't shoot well in either of the team's NCAA Tournament games, including a 3-for-11 showing against potential No. 1 overall draft prospect Chet Holmgren of Gonzaga while being limited by foul trouble. His offensive game is still developing beyond the rim-running lobbs and it's unclear what type of range he'll have. He also shot just 62.5% from the foul line.

Mark Williams, Duke

The 7-2, 242-pound sophomore is an elite rim protector with mobility and an improving offensive game.

Strengths: Williams offers incredible length, from a 9-9 standing reach to a wingspan of better than 7-6. That helped him rank 12th in Division I at 2.82 blocks per game while altering plenty more shots, so much so that now-retired Hall of Fame coach Mike

Krzyzewski compared him to a hockey goalie during the NCAA Tournament.

Krzyzewski had also noted that Williams — ranked as the No. 14 overall draft prospect by ESPN — had improved his lateral movement, giving him a better chance to handle switches and ballscreens.

On the offensive end, he averaged 11.2 points with the ability to go up and get lobbs for easy finishes.

"I'd say I'd bring to wherever I'd go just being that live threat: immediate rim protection, running the floor, playing hard, that sort of stuff," Williams said. "I think I bring that right away."

Concerns: The 20-year-old's offensive game is still in development. He showed more back-to-the-basket improvements last year, but there's still room to grow. He could also improve as a rebounder after averaging 7.4 boards with double-figure outputs in only 12 of 39 games despite his size.

Walker Kessler, Auburn

The 7-1, 256-pound sophomore is another elite shot blocker and top defender with mobility.

Strengths: ESPN's No. 26 overall draft prospect was named national defensive player of the year by Naismith and the National Association of Basketball Coaches after ranking second in Division I by blocking 4.56 shots per game, including nine games with at least seven blocks.

Kessler offers length (9-5 standing reach, better than 7-4 wingspan) and has shown mobility to pursue the ball and switch on the perimeter.

Offensively, averaged 11.4 points while shooting 60.8% from the field to go with 8.1 rebounds while playing alongside potential No. 1 overall pick Jabari Smith.

Concerns: Kessler's shooting touch

didn't show up in two college seasons, the first coming at North Carolina. Kessler shot just 57.7% at the foul line in two seasons while also hitting just 10-for-50 (20%) on three-pointers last season with the Tigers.

"If Walker came back to Auburn next year, he'd have looked a lot more like Jabari Smith from the standpoint of (being) that aggressive taking those shots," Auburn coach Bruce Pearl said Tuesday. "I hope that as he gets in and transitions to the NBA that that's what will happen for him at that next level as well."

Others to watch

■ **Jaylin Williams:** The 6-10, 237-pound sophomore helped Arkansas reach an NCAA regional final, playing with energy and an all-around ability to score, pass, take charges and block shots. He had 16 double-doubles last season and could sneak into the first round as ESPN's No. 36 overall draft prospect.

■ **Christian Koloko:** The 7-foot, 221-pound junior from Arizona is an athletic big man who can run the floor and block shots. He averaged 12.6 points, 7.3 rebounds and 2.8 blocks while improving as a free-throw shooter from 35% as a freshman to 73.5% this year. He's ESPN's No. 43 draft prospect, making him a likely second-round pick.

■ **Trevion Williams:** The 6-8, 265-pound senior helped Purdue claim its first No. 1 ranking in The Associated Press Top 25. Williams averaged 12.0 points and 7.4 rebounds, but also made a mark with his passing ability (3.0 assists). He's ESPN's No. 56 overall prospect and could be a second-round pick.

Aaron Beard, Associated Press



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Duke center Mark Williams, right, has a 9-foot, 9-inch standing reach to a wingspan of better than 7-6.

Big: Nation's top college recruit may wind up being No. 1 pick

FROM PAGE 24

Here's a look at the draft's top forwards and who may be the first three selections:

Holmgren

The nation's No. 1 recruit lived up to expectations for the Zags as a second-team AP All-American.

Strengths: The 7-foot, 195-pound Holmgren has an unusual mix of fluid perimeter skills with a roughly 7-5 wingspan. He averaged 14.1 points, 9.9 rebounds and 1.9 assists while shooting 60.7% alongside a returning AP All-American in Drew Timme.

He made 39% of his three-point tries and had 14 games with at least two made threes, showing the kind of consistency sure to pull less-mobile bigs from the basket. And he has the ball-handling skills to take advantage — just look at his length-of-court, behind-the-back drive for a dunk against UCLA for proof — for unique shot-creating potential in such a long frame.

"I definitely see a lot of things in the NBA style of game that I feel like I can thrive in," Holmgren said Monday, "with the spacing, with the speed ...

you're getting up and down for 48 minutes. So I definitely think I have a lot of tools that are suited for that."

At the other end, Holmgren proved an elite rim protector, ranking fourth in Division I with 3.7 blocks per game.

Concerns: He needs to get stronger. He struggled at times with physical play and could use the added bulk for finishing through contact, too.

Smith

The 6-10, 220-pound freshman was a second-team AP All-American who helped the Tigers claim their first-ever No. 1 ranking.

Strengths: The 19-year-old Smith is a rangy forward with potential to impact both ends of the floor. He averaged 16.9 points, 7.4 rebounds and 2.0 assists with ability to play in the post or step outside, where he shot 42% from three-point range with a good-quality jumper. He also made 79.9% of his free throws to convert when drawing fouls. He also averaged 1.0 blocks and 1.1 steals with the versatility to chase multiple positions, making him ESPN's No. 2 overall prospect.

"I just see myself defending, affecting

winning and just doing whatever a team needs me to do," Smith said. "Spacing the floor, knocking down shots, running the floor, and just showing all assets to my game."

Concerns: Smith shot just 42% overall with heavy reliance on his jump shot, so he could use a bit more development with creating off the drive and improving his ball handling (1.9 turnovers per game) for easier looks.

Banchero

The 6-10, 250-pound freshman was the Blue Devils' focal point in a Final Four run under now-retired Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski.

Strengths: The 19-year-old Banchero averaged 17.2 points and 7.8 rebounds with the strength to tussle inside and mobility to roam the perimeter. Ranked as ESPN's No. 3 draft prospect, the AP third-team All-American was comfortable snatching down a rebound and leading the break. And his skillset proved particularly effective in being able to overpower smaller defenders, move around less-mobile bigs and score in the midrange with polish.

Banchero said Friday he feels he is

"the best player in the draft, I feel like I showed that throughout the year." Duke associate head coach Chris Carrawell said he thinks Banchero should go No. 1 overall, too.

"For a non-guard at his size, he can create shots from the inside and out," Carrawell said. "That's rare."

Concerns: Banchero shot just 33.8% on three-pointers, though he was better in the NCAA Tournament. He also had stretches when he could assert himself and impose his will even more, including going the final 7½ minutes of the Final Four loss to rival North Carolina with no baskets and only two shot attempts. Banchero also needs to improve defensive consistency.

Others to watch

■ **Keegan Murray:** While the Holmgren-Smith-Banchero trio could go 1-2-3, the Iowa forward and first-team AP All-American won't be far behind. The 6-8, 225-pound Murray, who turns 22 in August, made a rapid rise from averaging 7.2 points as a freshman to 23.5 points and 8.7 rebounds while shooting 55.4% overall and 39.8% on three-pointers. That all-around development

has made him ESPN's No. 5 overall prospect at a loaded position.

■ **Jeremy Sochan:** The 6-9, 230-pound freshman offers defensive versatility and toughness in a developing game. ESPN's No. 15 draft prospect averaged 9.2 points and 6.4 rebounds for Baylor, and turned 19 only last month.

■ **E.J. Liddell:** The Ohio State junior has a strong frame (6-7, 243 pounds) ready to handle physical play. The AP third-team All-American averaged 19.4 points and 7.9 rebounds while shooting 49% from the field and 37% from three-point range. Liddell is ESPN's No. 20 draft prospect.

■ **Jake Laravia:** The 6-8, 227-pound junior made a quick impact at Wake Forest after transferring in following two years at Indiana State. He showed versatility while averaging 14.6 points and 6.6 rebounds and shooting 38% from behind the arc as a potential first-round prospect.

■ **Dominick Barlow:** The 6-9, 221-pound Barlow played for the Overtime Elite developmental program for top prospects who bypass college basketball. He's a potential second-round pick.

NBA DRAFT



CHRIS SZAGOLA/AP

Purdue's Jaden Ivey erupted in his second college season, becoming an All-American with explosive athleticism and scoring ability. He's the headliner among floor leaders entering the NBA Draft.

TOP POINT GUARDS

Jaden Ivey, Purdue

The 6-foot-4, 195-pound guard is a top-5 prospect with his potential both as a scorer and playmaker.

Strengths: With athleticism to play either guard spot, the 20-year-old Ivey went from a complimentary piece as a freshman (11.1 points per game) to a second-team Associated Press All-American averaging 17.3 points and 4.9 rebounds. Ranked as the draft's No. 4 prospect by ESPN, Ivey has proven the ability to score off the dribble or finish at the rim, whether gliding gracefully through traffic or throwing down with power.

Notably, his improved shooting helped elevate his game beyond highlight-reel moments. Ivey shot 46% from the field (up from 39.9% as a freshman) from the field and 35.8% from behind the arc (up from 25.8%) last season. That included going from having eight games with at least two made threes as a freshman to 21 such games last year.

Concerns: Ivey has the tools to develop into a top-quality defender but needs more consistency there. Offensively, he had a tendency at times to play out of control with his aggressive edge, making him prone to turnovers (2.6 per game, close to his 3.1-assist average) and forced shots.

Dyson Daniels

The 19-year-old bypassed the college ranks to play for Ignite, bringing size and versatility to the pro ranks.

Strengths: The 6-7, 195-pound Daniels has the size to play and defend

multiple positions, particularly as a point guard who added another inch and roughly 20 pounds of strength to his frame in the past year.

Ranked No. 6 by ESPN, Daniels has a nearly 6-11 wingspan and posted the fastest time (2.81 seconds) of any player tested at the NBA scouting combine in the shuttle run. He averaged 11.3 points, 5.9 rebounds, 4.4 assists and 1.9 assists for Ignite.

"For me, playing the point guard position and being 6-7 is really beneficial to me," Daniels said in an interview with the AP in late March. "I'm able to go play down in the low post, play with the ball in my hands off pick and rolls and stuff like that. It was a big focus for me putting on size and weight this year."

Concerns: Daniels' outside shot is still developing.

Ty Washington Jr., Kentucky

The Wildcats' latest one-and-done player is a first-round prospect with his playmaking ability.

Strengths: The 6-4, 196-pound freshman showed quickness and versatility at both guard spots. That included time at the point for injured Sahvir Wheeler and setting a single-game school record with 17 assists in a January win against Georgia.

Ranked No. 17 by ESPN, Washington was second on the team in scoring (12.5 points) while shooting 45% and averaging 3.9 assists. He also committed more than two turnovers in just six of 31 games.

Concerns: The outside shot must improve after making just 36 three-pointers and shooting 35% from behind the arc. Durability also became an issue as he missed three games because of injury and twice failed to hit double figures in the final four games, including going 2-for-10 in the stunning loss to St. Peter's in the NCAA Tournament.

Others to watch

■ **Kennedy Chandler:** The 6-0, 172-pound Tennessee freshman is a first-round prospect with speed and the defensive skills to rank among the nation's best in steals (2.2). ESPN's No. 19 draft prospect also shot 38% from three-point range, including 17-for-30 (56.7%) in seven games in March, and had the best max vertical leap (41.5 inches) of any player measured at the NBA scouting combine.

■ **Dalen Terry:** The 6-7 sophomore brought size and defense to the Arizona backcourt as a potential first-round prospect while taking a leading role late in the season due to teammate Kerr Kriisa's ankle injury.

■ **Andrew Nembhard:** The 6-5 senior was a starter in Gonzaga's run to the 2021 NCAA title game, then averaged 11.8 points and 5.8 assists last season while improving his three-point shooting (38.3%). Nembhard could be a late first-round pick.

■ **Jean Montero:** The 6-2, 172-pounder bypassed college to play for the Overtime Elite developmental program, and is a second-round prospect.

Aaron Beard, Associated Press

TOP WINGS

Benedict Mathurin, Arizona

The 6-6 sophomore blossomed in his second season to become ESPN's No. 8 draft prospect.

Strengths: Mathurin was a second-team Associated Press All-American with above-the-rim athleticism and a reliable jumper. He averaged 17.7 points while shooting 38.3% on three-pointers over two seasons. He had a big March moment, scoring 30 points and coming through in the clutch to help Arizona survive an overtime win against TCU in the NCAA Tournament's second round.

"I took advantage of March Madness to showcase my talent," Mathurin said Thursday. "And I felt like there was a great chance for me, for people to see what I'm able to do."

Concerns: While his length offers defensive potential, Mathurin could also use more consistency at that end of the floor, with ESPN college basketball analyst Fran Fraschilla noting earlier this year that Mathurin has room to grow with making reads and handling the pick and roll.

A.J. Griffin, Duke

The 6-6 small forward, son of former NBA player and current Toronto Raptors assistant coach Adrian Griffin, offers outside shooting, length and defensive potential.

Strengths: Griffin, who turns 19 in August, is ESPN's No. 9 draft prospect after

averaging 10.4 points. His stroke was terrific, with the freshman hitting 44.7% of his three-pointers and tallying a dozen games with at least three threes. There were also flashes of ability to take over games, highlighted by his 27 points in a February romp against rival North Carolina.

Concerns: There's a limited sample size to evaluate a player who missed most of his last two prep seasons to injuries. He also must develop off the dribble to complement his range.

Johnny Davis, Wisconsin

The 6-5 sophomore went from role player off the bench to unexpected star for Wisconsin.

Strengths: Davis plays with aggression and toughness at both ends. Ranked as ESPN's No. 11 draft prospect, Davis averaged 19.7 points and 8.2 rebounds to become an AP first-team All-American while proving capable of creating his own shot or looks for his teammates.

His all-around 37-point performance in a road win against then-No. 3 Purdue in January illustrated his upside, with Boilermakers coach Matt Painter calling him "the definition of a two-way player."

Concerns: Davis needs to improve his outside shooting after making just 30.6% on threes, including 10-for-48 (20.8%) in his last 15 games.

Shaedon Sharpe

The 6-5 guard has taken an unusual



DENIS POROY/AP

Arizona guard Benedict Mathurin showcased above-the-rim athleticism and a reliable jumper.

route to the draft after a semester-long stop at Kentucky.

Strengths: He was considered the No. 1 recruit in the class of 2022 before reclassifying and enrolling with the Wildcats in January, with the stated plan of playing the 2022-23 season. Hall of Fame coach John Calipari raved about the Canadian's athleticism and shooting, with Sharpe showing the ability to finish around the rim, score off the dribble and hit from outside in the prep ranks. Ranked as ESPN's No. 7 draft prospect, he also measured just shy of a 7-foot wingspan at the NBA Draft combine.

Concerns: Sharpe hasn't played since a nationally televised high school game in October, leaving little body of work to evaluate against other top pro prospects



MORRY GASH/AP

Wisconsin's Johnny Davis is a lottery prospect and one of the top wings in this year's NBA Draft.

after his decision to leave school.

"My last game was high school, so I feel like there is curiosity and mystery with me," Sharpe said Friday. "But like I said before, I'm just in the gym getting ready."

Others to watch:

■ **Ousmane Dieng:** The 19-year-old Frenchman spent last season in the Australian National Basketball League's Next Stars program for elite prospects. Ranked No. 12 by ESPN, the 6-10 Dieng has intriguing perimeter skills as a potential lottery pick. But he must develop his outside shot (27% from three-point range in the NBL) and add bulk (205 pounds).

■ **Malaki Branham:** The 6-5 freshman from Ohio State averaged 13.7 points while shooting 41.6% from three-

point range and 83% from the foul line. He could go late in the lottery and is ESPN's No. 13 draft prospect.

■ **Ochai Agbaji:** The 6-6 senior was a first-team AP All-American and the most outstanding player at the Final Four as Kansas won the NCAA championship. Agbaji elevated his game last season to average 18.8 points and 5.1 rebounds while also proving to be a good-quality defender, making him a first-round prospect and ranked No. 16 by ESPN.

■ **Tari Eason:** The 6-8 sophomore and Cincinnati transfer brought a 7-2 wingspan and the versatility to defend multiple positions to LSU, part of the reason he's a first-round prospect and ESPN's No. 17 prospect.

Aaron Beard, Associated Press

SPORTS



Matthews named MVP

Center becomes third Maple Leaf to win Hart Trophy » **NHL, Page 21**

NBA DRAFT

Big three

Smith, Holmgren, Banchero jockeying to be No. 1 choice

BY AARON BEARD
Associated Press

Forwards are expected to dominate Thursday's NBA Draft, starting with the trio of Gonzaga's Chet Holmgren, Auburn's Jabari Smith and Duke's Paolo Banchero. They are the headliners at the position and have been widely ranked as the top prospects overall with their size and open-floor potential.

Those three are also the clear frontrunners for the No. 1 pick. Smith has already worked out for the Orlando Magic, the team with the No. 1 pick. He also worked out with Oklahoma City, the team that holds the No. 2 pick in Thursday's draft.



Banchero

Smith said he enjoyed the workout with the Thunder, but made no secret of his wish to be the No. 1 pick.

"It would mean a lot to me," Smith told reporters. "A lot of great players have went No. 1. It would mean the world to me."

Holmgren, Smith and Banchero have similarities. All are forwards, all at least 6-foot-10 (Holmgren is a 7-footer), and all played one year of college ball. Holmgren and Smith were second-team AP All-Americans this past season, Banchero a third-team selection.

SEE BIG ON PAGE 22



CHRIS O'MEARA, ABOVE, AND ROSS D. FRANKLIN, LEFT/AP

Above: Auburn forward Jabari Smith averaged 16.9 points, 7.4 rebounds and 2.0 assists in his only college season, earning second-team Associated Press All-American honors. Left: Gonzaga center Chet Holmgren was the nation's No. 1 recruit and played just one season before declaring for the NBA Draft.

Texas A&M, Arkansas avoid elimination

» College World Series, Page 19

