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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Drones, new squad vehicle key to nimble Army platoons

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Army is using its new troop-moving vehicle and small drones to create smaller, more mobile reconnaissance and strike teams, dubbed by some as hunter-killer platoons, according to the commander of the Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division.

Those light units possess highly “organic” see-sense-strike capabilities, qualities employed in the culminating scenario of a massive two-week exercise in Hawaii that ended Thursday, Maj. Gen. Marcus Evans said by phone Monday during a media roundtable from the Philippines.

Central to that desired agility is the Army’s new Infantry Squad Vehicle that allows small formations of soldiers to transit the battle space more nimbly and with greater stealth.

Almost 100 of the new vehicles were used during the recent exercise.

“It has really provided the formation the ability to move at night over different distances, to be able to become really small, and then to come back together to mass formations at the appropriate place and time,” Evans said.

“The reason that’s important is, based on the lessons that we are seeing out of Ukraine, it is important to be extremely agile, while at the same time being very small, which in turn makes you less targetable, and then being able to come together as a fighting formation at a particular time,” said Evans, who was joined on the call by division Command Sgt. Maj. Shaun Curry.

They were in the Philippines to

SEE PLATOONS ON PAGE 7



JUAN MALDONADO/U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, detonate an oval charge during a demolition range at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, on Oct. 9. The military is developing new ways to protect warfighters from blast overpressure during training.

Mitigating risks to brain health

With injuries a growing problem, the US military tests how to protect troops from blasts

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The blast shook the ground and its red flash of fire covered the doorway as U.S. special operations forces blew open a door during a recent training exercise.

Moments later, in their next attempt, the boom was noticeably suppressed and the blaze a bit smaller, a testament to just one of

the new technologies that U.S. Special Operations Command is using to limit the brain injuries that have become a growing problem for the military.

From new required testing and blast monitors to reshaping an explosive charge that reduces its blowback on troops, the command is developing new ways to better protect warfighters from such blast overpressure and to evaluate

their health risks, particularly during training.

“We have guys lining up to volunteer for these studies,” said retired Sgt. Maj. F. Bowling, a former special operations medic who now works as a contractor at the command. “This is extremely important to the community. They’re very concerned about it.”

The Defense Department does not have good data on the number

of troops with blast overpressure problems, which are much harder to detect than a traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic brain injuries are better known and have been a persistent problem among combat forces, including those subjected to missile strikes and explosions that hit nearby.

SEE BLASTS ON PAGE 7

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Disney names Gorman to serve as next chairman

Associated Press

The Walt Disney Co. is tapping Morgan Stanley executive James Gorman to serve as its next chairman, beginning early next year. The entertainment giant also announced that it anticipates naming its new CEO in early 2026.

Gorman will become chairman on Jan. 2, 2025. He will succeed Mark Parker, who is leaving after serving on Disney's board for nine years.

Gorman is currently chair of Disney's succession planning

committee. He serves as executive chairman at Morgan Stanley, but will be stepping down from that post at the end of the year. Gorman previously served as Morgan Stanley's CEO from 2010 to 2023 and chairman from 2012 to 2023.

Gorman has previous succession planning experience, as he oversaw the process at Morgan Stanley.

"The Disney board has benefited tremendously from James Gorman's expertise and guidance,

and we are lucky to have him as our next chairman — particularly as the board continues to move forward with the succession process," Disney CEO Bob Iger said in a statement on Monday.

Iger came back to Disney in 2022 after a period of clashes, missteps and a weakening financial performance at the company under his chosen successor, Bob Chapek.

Iger was Disney's public face for 15 years before he retired in 2020.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Oct. 23)	0.90	Bahrain (Dinar)	.3769
British pound (Oct. 23)	\$1.27	Britain (Pound)	1.2962
Japanese yen (Oct. 23)	145.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3824
South Korean won (Oct. 23)	1345.00	China (Yuan)	7.1212
		Denmark (Krone)	6.9007
		Egypt (Pound)	48.6713
		Euro	0.9253
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7737
		Hungary (Forint)	370.64
		Israel (Shekel)	3.7696
		Japan (Yen)	150.93
		Kuwait (Dinar)	.3065
		Norway (Krone)	10.9294
		Philippines (Peso)	57.84
		Poland (Zloty)	4.00
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7556
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3162
		South Korea (Won)	1379.31
Switzerland (Franc)	.8657		
Thailand (Baht)	33.49		
Turkey (NewLira)	34.2372		

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

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.00
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00
Federal funds market rate	4.83
3-month bill	4.63
30-year bond	4.50

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



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MILITARY

NCO charged with attempted murder, rape

Fort Cavazos soldier accused of breaking into barracks to assault 5 women, court records show

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — A Fort Cavazos sergeant broke into the barracks rooms of five soldiers with the intent to rape them — holding two of the women at gunpoint and strangling one with a lamp cord until he thought she was dead, according to court records.

Sgt. Greville Clarke, 31, was arraigned Monday on nine charges with a total of 27 counts, including attempted premeditated murder, attempted rape, violation of a lawful general regulation, rape, unlawful recording, robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, kidnapping and obstruction of justice.

There are five victims, according to the Army Office of Special Trial Counsel, which is prosecuting the case. Clarke pleaded not guilty Monday and delayed selecting a court-martial with a jury or only a judge.

Clarke has been in pretrial confinement at the Bell County Justice Center since Oct. 3, 2022, the day after the last attack.

Michelle McCaskill, spokeswoman for the Office of Special Trial Counsel, said last month that the case has taken nearly two years to bring to court because piecing to-

gether the additional accusations and multiple victims took “substantial investigative and administrative efforts.”

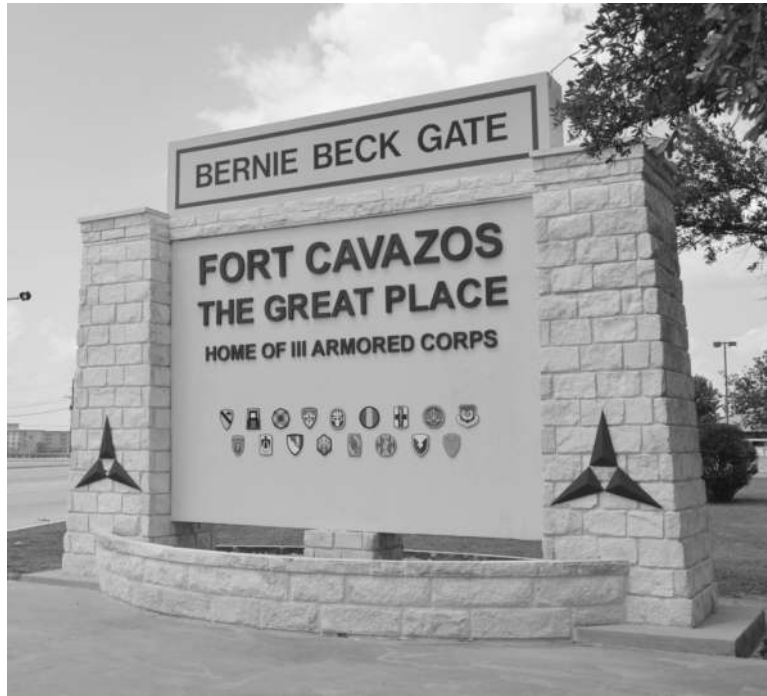
In the last incident on Oct. 2, 2022, Clarke is accused of breaking into a woman’s barracks room, holding her at gunpoint and tying her hands up with a rope, blindfolding her, touching her sexually and taking photos of her naked, according to 21-page charge sheet.

At some point in the attack, Clarke hit her head with the loaded firearm, took two cellphones and her credit card and then stole \$14,000 from her bank account. It ended when he forced her into a footlocker to move her to another location, but she managed to escape and run around a corner before he could shoot at her.

The charge sheet does not indicate how long the attack lasted.

That same day, Fort Cavazos officials sent out a text-message alert to soldiers living at the intersection of Legends Way and 37th Street on the Texas base warning them to stay away because a man with a gun had been seen.

The charge sheet described a similar attack that occurred July 15-17, 2022, in which Clarke used a handgun to hold a woman against



ROSE L. THAYER/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Greville Clarke faces multiple charges including rape and attempted murder for incidents in which he broke into the barracks rooms of five soldiers at Fort Cavazos, according to court records.

her will, tie her arms and legs and blindfold and rape her. He strangled her with a lamp cord and placed his foot on her neck, only stopping when he thought she was dead.

He also photographed that woman and took her cellphone, two car keys, a room key, an Apple watch, a wallet, her military ID card, five pillows, two sheets, two blankets and a comforter. He then

washed and disposed of the bed items, according to the charge sheet.

On March 5, 2022, and March 16, 2021, Clarke is accused of breaking into two other barracks rooms and holding the women against their will at knifepoint with the intent to rape and assault them.

He is accused of breaking into a fifth room July 11-15, 2022, with the intent to rape the occupant, but there are no additional charges for that incident.

Other charges against Clarke include not registering the firearm to keep it at his on-post residence and disposing of victims’ cellphones to hide evidence.

Soldiers who live in family housing on base are only allowed to keep firearms in their home if they are registered. Soldiers living in the barracks must store personally owned weapons in their unit’s armory.

Military Judge Col. Maureen Kohn presided over the arraignment at Fort Cavazos, where Clarke is assigned to the 74th Multi-Role Bridge Company, 62nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade. His next court hearing is scheduled for Dec. 10.

JROTC racks up 21 allegations of sexual misconduct

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department said it is committed to carrying out congressionally required reforms to its Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program after 21 instructors were accused of sexual misconduct in the 2022-23 school year.

The number was disclosed in an annual report that lawmakers mandated last year amid investigations into widespread sexual assault in the century-old high school program, which is designed to teach students about civic duty.

A Senate probe led by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., found 114 allegations of violence, including sexual abuse and sexual harassment of JROTC students by instructors, between 2012 and 2022. A separate House Oversight Committee investigation in 2022 uncovered 60 allegations in the previous five years.

Pentagon officials told Warren in a letter last month that they were implementing key reforms pushed by Congress last year to address the issue, including the creation of standardized agreements that require high schools to notify military branches of instructor misconduct investiga-



GREYDON FURSTEN/U.S. Air Force

Twenty-one instructors in the overall JROTC program were accused of sexual misconduct in the 2022-23 school year, the Defense Department said.

tions within one business day.

The Defense Department also has established a code of conduct that instructors will have to sign every year as well as a form in English and Spanish for parents and students that provides resources and points of contact for reporting instances of inappropriate behavior.

Instructors are barred from developing a personal, intimate or sexual relationship with a cadet or student, attempting to gain sexual

favours from a cadet or student, or making or accepting sexual advances from a cadet or student, according to a prohibited activities form that instructors must sign.

JROTC instructors are typically retired or reserve officers and enlisted noncommissioned officers but can also be active-duty service members and honorably discharged veterans. They are hired as employees of the school district but also have oversight from the military services, according to the

Congressional Research Service.

“The department has implemented enhanced policies to facilitate increased oversight of JROTC programs and foster communication with the schools and school districts that host the programs,” the Pentagon wrote in its 2024 report to Congress.

It added “any incidence of sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct by JROTC instructors is unacceptable.”

Warren said she was glad to see the Defense Department was “taking important steps to implement these reforms” but expressed dismay that sexual misconduct had taken root in a program that enrolls nearly 500,000 students nationwide.

“It’s unthinkable that students who have joined JROTC to develop leadership skills and learn about military service have been abused by their instructors — adults they’re supposed to be able to trust,” she said.

The latest figures show there were nine allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment and discrimination in the Army JROTC between July 2022 and June 2023, six in the Navy JROTC, three in the Air Force JROTC and three in the Marine Corps JROTC.

Seven of the allegations were in

Texas, four were in Florida and the rest were spread across 10 other states, according to the Pentagon’s report.

Of the 21 investigations, 13 were substantiated, four were not substantiated and four were ongoing when the report was written. Seventeen instructors were removed and permanently decertified as a result of either administrative or criminal probes, and four instructors were retained or reinstated.

The Defense Department said allegations of misconduct against JROTC instructors are investigated and adjudicated in the “same manner as any allegations against other faculty or staff members of that school district and jurisdiction.”

It noted the Pentagon and military services have no authority over the eligibility of a person to work as a JROTC instructor beyond decertifying them.

The Defense Department is required to update the Senate and House Armed Services committees on sexual misconduct allegations in the JROTC program each year until 2029. The latest report promises to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pentagon’s reforms in the coming years and make “necessary adjustments” to reduce and address misconduct.

MILITARY

2 aviators killed in Growler crash were trailblazers

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

Two aviators who died when their fighter jet crashed last week near Mount Rainier during routine training were a trailblazing female duo who recently returned from a Red Sea deployment, the Navy said.

Lt. Cmdr. Lyndsay Evans and Lt. Serena Wileman, both 31, were identified Monday by Naval Air Forces Pacific. The two were declared dead Sunday — five days after the EA-18G Growler jet from the Electronic Attack Squadron 130, nicknamed “Zappers,” went down east of Mount Rainier in Washington state.

“More than just names and ranks, they were role models, trailblazers, and women whose influence touched countless people on the flight deck and well beyond,” according to a tribute from Carrier Strike Group 2, the unit with which the aviators recently deployed.

Evans’ and Wileman’s fates were unknown Oct. 15 following the crash, which proved difficult to locate. On Oct. 16, search and rescue crews found the wreckage site resting at about 6,000 feet in a remote, heavily wooded area that was inaccessible by foot or vehicle. Special Forces soldiers trained in mountaineering, high-angle rescue and technical communications were brought in Thursday to reach the wreckage and locate the aviators.

“It is with a heavy heart that we share the loss of two beloved Zappers,” Cmdr. Timothy Warburton, commanding officer of the aviators’ Electronic Attack Squadron, said Sunday.

Evans, a naval flight officer, commissioned in 2014. Evans was a native of Palmdale in Southern California’s Antelope Valley, accord-



Lt. Cmdr. Lyndsay P. Evans, 31, also was killed when the Navy jet crashed near Mount Rainier.

ing to a report in the Culver City Observer highlighting her role as a pilot in an all-female flyover of the 2023 Super Bowl. The newspaper said she graduated from Paraclete High School in 2010 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 2014. Her awards include the National Defense Service Medal and Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

Wileman, also a California native, was commissioned in 2018 from Officer Candidate School. She reported in November 2022 to the squadron, which is based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash. Her awards include the National Defense Service Medal and three Strike-Flight Air medals. Both women also were awarded the Combat Action Ribbon for their roles in defending maritime mer-



Photos by U.S. Navy

Lt. Serena Wileman, 31, was one of two aviators killed last week when the EA-18G Growler that they were flying crashed near Mount Rainier in Washington state.

chant ships from Houthi drone attacks during their recent deployment. Evans and Wileman are among the few women to fly combat missions over land, flying multiple strikes into Houthi-controlled territories in Yemen, according to the Navy.

The duo returned in July from a nearly nine-month deployment with the strike group as a part of Carrier Air Wing 3 aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. They primarily operated in the Red Sea.

“During their deployment, Evans and Wileman distinguished themselves in combat operations. Their efforts directly contributed to the Navy’s mission defending U.S. and coalition forces while keeping the seas open and free with precision and purpose,” Carrier

Strike Group 2 said. “These role models cemented legacies by making history that will inspire future generations of Naval officers and aviators.”

Capt. Marvin Scott, commander of Carrier Air Wing 3, said Evans and Wileman will be remembered for their tenacity, their outstanding contributions to the defense of others and the positive energy they brought to naval aviation.

“As true leaders in the Growler community, [Electronic Attack Squadron 130], and across my air wing, their contributions cannot be overstated. I could not be more proud to have served with each of them,” Scott said. “Every member of the [Carrier Air Wing 3] Battle Axe Team is heartbroken at the loss of these exceptional warriors.”

Base closes Burger King over rodent evidence

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The wing commander at this airlift hub in western Tokyo closed an on-base Burger King on Monday following “allegations of unsatisfactory health conditions.”

“The closure was due to evidence of a rodent sighting within the facility’s food preparation area,” Master Sgt. Nathan Allen, spokesman for the 374th Airlift Wing, said in an email Tuesday.

Col. Richard McElhaney, head of the 374th Airlift Wing, ordered the restaurant closed until further notice based on a recommendation from public health specialists from the 374th Medical Group, according to a Monday post on Yokota’s official Facebook page.

A notice posted on the Burger King’s door indicates the restaurant may reopen by Friday.

Base authorities were aware of a rodent problem at the restaurant. Local managers for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, which holds the franchise, worked with the 374th Civil Engineer Squadron’s pest management and entomology teams “to address previous rodent sightings around the facility,” Allen wrote.

After further evaluation, the public health section recommended temporarily closing the restaurant Monday “out of an abundance of caution to safeguard the community,” he said.

Allen said AAFES and the wing “are mutually committed to restoring operations safely and expeditiously.”

Closing a Burger King on base could result in penalties, including loss of the license to operate it, depending on the nature and duration of the closure, Allen wrote.

“Additionally, the impact of the lost service to the community is an important factor in these considerations,” he said. “AAFES, along with the brand and local 374th Airlift Wing leadership will evaluate the best path forward to restore operations and community service while ensuring public health and safety.”

Court decisions deny GOP challenges to overseas voters

Associated Press

Courts in Michigan and North Carolina on Monday rejected attempts by Republicans to disqualify the ballots of certain overseas voters.

Both cases targeted people who have never lived in the state but were born overseas to parents who were residents of the state. The Michigan case also targeted the spouses of military and overseas voters.

A state judge in Michigan dismissed the Republicans’ case be-

cause it was filed so late — less than a month before the Nov. 5 presidential election. But the judge also found that the election language allowing those voters to cast ballots complied with both state and federal law, as well as the Michigan Constitution.

The state GOPs and the Republican National Committee were among the plaintiffs bringing both cases, which were filed as part of a broader legal strategy against overseas ballots in presidential battleground states ahead of the

Nov. 5 election.

The RNC did not immediately return requests for comment.

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson criticized the lawsuit in her state as frivolous and described Monday’s ruling as a win for election integrity.

“This baseless lawsuit targeted the voting rights of U.S. citizens and their families living abroad, including the children of active-duty military service members,” she said in a statement. “It represents a new low in the ongoing PR

campaign to cast doubt on the security of Michigan’s elections.”

In North Carolina, a judge hearing a case in Wake County Superior Court denied a preliminary injunction the Republicans were seeking against the state Board of Elections.

The decision will allow people who have never lived in the state, but were born overseas to parents or guardians who were North Carolina residents, to vote as usual in the November presidential election.



KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

The Burger King at Yokota Air Base, Japan, was closed indefinitely on Monday.

PACIFIC



Kim Hong-Ji/Reuters

South Korean soldiers work next to a military facility where loudspeakers dismantled in 2018 used to be, near the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas in Paju, South Korea, on June 10.

South's DMZ loudspeakers inform North Koreans about some troops sent to Russia

By YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — The South Korean loudspeakers blaring at the Demilitarized Zone are causing pain for the residents of the nearby Unification Village, the village chief told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

Since Monday, the South Korean armed forces' "Voice of Freedom" has been broadcasting around-the-clock to North Koreans that their troops are deployed to Russia to support the invasion of Ukraine, Lee Wanbae said.

"Not only me but also my villagers have been hearing the anti-Pyongyang loudspeaker broadcasts all day long every day," he said. "The military broadcasts it from 6

a.m. to 10 p.m. ... and it is very loud. So, our ears are starting to hurt."

Unification Village, in a buffer zone just outside the DMZ, is just over a mile from the no-man's land dividing the two countries.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service estimates the North has sent nearly 12,000 troops, including special forces, to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a spokeswoman for the service told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed in June to a mutual defense pact in the event either country is attacked.

Russian Ambassador to Seoul Georgy Zinoviev was summoned Monday by South Korea's first

vice foreign minister, Kim Hong-kyun, who "strongly" called for the immediate withdrawal of North Korean troops and to "stop relevant cooperation" with Pyongyang, according to a foreign ministry news release that day.

A spokesman for the South's Ministry of National Defense declined to comment on the broadcasts. A spokesman for the country's Joint Chiefs of Staff said they are produced by the armed forces' Defense Psychological Operation Group.

The joint chiefs do not comment on the content of those broadcasts, the spokesman said.

It's customary in South Korea for some government officials to speak to the media without identifying themselves.

S. Korea will 'not sit idly' with North troops in Russia

Seoul, in response, may consider sending weapons to aid Ukraine

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Korea will take "phased measures" in response to reports suggesting the North is deploying troops to aid Russia in its invasion of Ukraine, according to a news release Tuesday from the office of President Yoon Suk Yeol.

Possible steps include diplomatic, economic and military options, and South Korea could consider sending both defensive and offensive weapons to Ukraine, a senior South Korean presidential official told reporters on condition of anonymity in a background briefing.

The South will "not sit idly by," but would "respond firmly with the international community if the current military collusion between North Korea and Russia continues," the release states.

The statement followed an emergency meeting in Seoul of the South's national security council, called in response to intelligence and news reports revealing thousands of North Korean troops are in Russia to support its two-year invasion of Ukraine, according to the release.

Roughly 1,500 North Korean troops were deployed to Russia by ship earlier this month and given Russian uniforms and weapons, South Korea's National Intelligence Service reported Friday.

Another 10,000 North Korean troops followed them, an intelligence service spokeswoman told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

South Korean government spokespeople customarily speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

If Moscow's military cooperation with the North continues to pose "a serious threat" to its security, the South will "prepare corresponding measures," according to the release.

"The government will take phased measures in line with the progress of Russia-North Korea military cooperation," Yoon's office said.

Security issues in the Indo-Pacific and Atlantic "are insepara-



Yeol

ble" and the South will take unspecified "step-by-step measures" in response to Pyongyang's military aid to Moscow, Yoon told NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte by phone Monday, according to a news release from Yoon's office that day.

Rutte said NATO was prepared to cooperate with the South in its response to the North's troop deployment; he and Yoon agreed that sending North Korean troops to Ukraine violates international law and U.N. Security Council resolutions, the release said.

The deployment of North Korean troops on Russian soil marks a deepening of military ties between Russia and North Korea, as well as escalating the South's role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

During a June summit in Pyongyang, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged mutual military support if either were attacked.

The U.S. State Department has accused North Korea of exporting ballistic missiles and artillery shells to Russia since 2023.

Following the Kim-Putin summit, Yoon's office said it would review its policy of sending only nonlethal aid to Ukraine. Sending weapons would depend on Russia's military cooperation with the North, South Korean national security adviser Chang Ho-jin said during a televised interview June 23.

South Korea, a global arms exporter, has supplied Ukraine with humanitarian aid but has resisted sending lethal weapons, citing its nonconfrontational policy in the conflict.

Seoul has instead supplied artillery shells to the U.S. military, which has struggled to maintain its stockpiles while exporting shells to Ukraine, according to U.S. and South Korean news reports citing unnamed government officials last year.

China holds live-fire drills opposite Taiwan a week after large-scale air-and-sea exercise

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — China is holding live-fire drills off the coast of its southern Fujian province facing Taiwan, just a week after a massive air-and-sea drill it described as punishment for Taiwan's president rejecting Beijing's claims of sovereignty.

The live-fire drills were being held near the Pingtan islands, according to a notice from the Maritime Safety Administration.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said China's drills were part of an annual exercise and it was tracking them.

"It cannot be ruled out that it is one of the ways to expand the deterrent effect in line with the dynamics in the Taiwan Strait," the statement added.

Taiwan is a self-ruled island that Beijing claims is part of China. Tensions around the issue have flared in recent years. China has increased its presence in the waters and skies around Taiwan. It now increasingly sends large numbers of warplanes and navy vessels to military exercises near Taiwan, and its coast guard carries out patrols.

Last week, China held a one-day military exercise aimed at practicing the "sealing off of key ports and key areas." Taiwan counted a record one-day total of 153 aircraft, 14 navy vessels and 12 Chinese government ships.

Taiwan's premier, Cho Jung-tai, called on China to stop its exercises aimed at Taiwan.

"Like all democratic countries

in the world, we believe that China's military exercises are a threat to regional peace and stability. Regardless of the scale of the exercise, China's military exercises should not frequently approach Taiwan to make meaningless declarations," he said.

In response to Chinese moves, the U.S. has continued what it calls "freedom of navigation" transits through the Taiwan Strait. On Sunday, the destroyer USS Higgins and the Canadian frigate HMCS Vancouver transited the narrow band of ocean that separates China and Taiwan.

Germany sent two warships through the Taiwan Strait last month as it seeks to increase its defense engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.

MILITARY

Report: F-35s failing to meet readiness goals

Army, Navy, Marines did not meet minimum rates despite spending \$12 million in six years

By **TONY CAPACCIO**
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — All versions of the F-35, the world's costliest weapons program, have failed to meet minimum combat readiness rates for six straight years, according to the watchdog agency for Congress.

That's despite the Army, Navy and Marine Corps spending \$12 billion, or about 21%, of \$57.2 billion for aircraft operations and maintenance appropriated by Congress during that time on the fighter jet built by Lockheed Mar-

tin Corp., according to a Government Accountability Office tally released Monday.

The F-35s of all three services didn't reach their "mission capable rates in any of the years we reviewed," from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2023, according to the congressionally mandated assessment.

The "mission capable" rate is the percentage of time an aircraft in a squadron can fly and perform at least one of its assigned missions. More than 1,000 F-35s have been delivered to the U.S. military

and international partners in a program projected to produce more than 3,000 of the stealthy aircraft. The first F-35s were declared operational in 2015 by the Marine Corps. The Air Force followed in 2016 and the Navy in 2019.

The new assessment doesn't provide specific target readiness percentages, but a March 2023 GAO report said the objective for the Air Force's F-35A is 90%, while those for the Marines F-35B and the Navy's F-35C are 85%.

"The F-35's poor mission capa-

ble rates were due partly to challenges with depot and organizational maintenance," the audit found.

A GAO report in September 2023 said the F-35 fleet's mission capable rate in March of that year was about 55%.

Acknowledging the problem, Air Force Lieutenant General Michael Schmidt, the F-35 program manager, initiated a "War On Readiness" last year to improve the F-35's mission capable rate.

The GAO reviewed readiness trends of U.S. fighters — including

the F-35 — against the operations and maintenance dollars spent. "Mission capable rates for tactical aircraft have generally not met service goals for several years" because of issues "such as aging aircraft, maintenance challenges and supply support issues," the agency found.

Lockheed Martin said in a statement that the aircraft "consistently meets or exceeds the reliability performance requirements we are contracted to deliver," as "almost 90% of F-35 components are performing better than required."

Stealth fighter lands aboard modified Japanese warship

By **HANA KUSUMOTO**
AND **ALEX WILSON**
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. F-35B landed on a Japanese helicopter destroyer this week, bringing Japan one step closer to taking its own advanced stealth fighters to sea.

A Marine Corps Lightning II landed Sunday aboard the helicopter destroyer JS Kaga off San Diego's coast, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force announced Monday on social platform X.

The Kaga, an 814-foot-long flat deck carrier designed for helicopters, was modified to also carry the F-35B multirole fighters.

The flight deck was strengthened to withstand the heat of the fighter's engines during short takeoffs and vertical landings. The ship's bow was modified to reduce turbulence and extend the flight deck. The modified vessel went to sea for trials in November.

The landing was part of an ongoing 45-day trial of the Kaga's modifications led by the U.S. Navy's Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 23, Naval Air System Command's largest flight-test squadron, a Maritime Self-Defense Force



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

A Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II lands aboard the JS Kaga, a Japanese helicopter carrier, off Southern California, on Sunday.

spokesman said Tuesday.

Royal Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nick Baker, a test pilot with the F-35 Patuxent River Integrated Test Force, made the landing around 3:15 p.m. with a specially equipped F-35B, according to a test force news release Monday.

"This test is essential for

strengthening Japan's defense capabilities and is of utmost importance," the Kaga's skipper, Capt. Shusaku Takeuchi, said in the release. "We will do our best to achieve good test results together with the ITF."

The integrated test force, which is working with the evaluation

squadron on the Kaga's trials, includes maintenance specialists, flight test engineers, flight deck crews, logistics specialists and other personnel from the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, according to the release.

"We are proud to be part of this joint effort to test the compatibil-

ity of F-35B aboard JS Kaga," Seth Dion, the test force's team leader, said in the release. "Our team has prepared meticulously for this mission, and we are committed to working closely with our allies to achieve our shared goals and strengthen our partnership."

Additional tests are scheduled to determine if the ship has adequate maintenance space and whether the fighters can be adequately secured and maneuvered through Kaga's hangar bay, the Maritime Self-Defense Force spokesman said.

Some Japanese government spokespeople may speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

Testing on the Kaga began Oct. 5 and is expected to conclude Nov. 18. Kaga's sister ship, the JS Izumo, underwent similar retrofits in 2021.

Both Japanese ships still require another round of modifications, a Maritime Self-Defense Force spokesman said in April. The Izumo's final phase is scheduled to begin this fiscal year, and the Kaga's will begin after the Izumo is complete.

Navy announces site for new museum in DC, set to open by 2030

By **CAITLYN BURCHETT**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A new national museum for the U.S. Navy is planned for outside the historic Washington Navy Yard to give the public unfettered access to the sea service's history.

The museum will be built at Tingey Street and M Street near the Washington Nationals baseball stadium, the Navy announced in a ceremony Friday at the new site.

The museum is meant to replace the existing Navy National Museum located on base at the Navy Yard, which is largely off

limits to the general public.

"The new National Museum of the U.S. Navy will provide a dramatically improved opportunity for the American public to be inspired by the long history of valor and sacrifice of American sailors in the defense of our country, and to learn the vital importance of sea power to our way of life," said retired Rear Adm. Samuel J. Cox, director of the Naval History and Heritage Command. "It will showcase not only the legacy of the past but also the global operations of the Navy today, upholding the freedom of the seas, upon which our freedom depends."

The Navy evaluated 18 cities and 42 sites as candidates for a new location of the national museum, according to Kristina Higgins, spokeswoman for the Naval History and Heritage Command. The Washington site beat out locations in San Diego, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and Norfolk. Each city was evaluated for attendance, market diversity, operating gap, cost per visitor, fundraising potential and capital costs.

Estimates indicate the new National Museum of the U.S. Navy campus could attract more than 1.5 million visitors annually, Hig-

gins said.

In May, the Navy signed a land-exchange agreement that paved the way for the location.

The state-of-the-art facility is planned to expand beyond a traditional museum to a campus layout that combines the museum, a high-tech conference center and retail space with dining options. The museum is intended to be a self-funded tourist destination that aims to intrigue, inform and inspire generations of visitors, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command.

The construction of the museum is estimated to cost \$250 mil-

lion, with opportunities for additional development that could total up to \$500 million, she said.

To raise funds for the new museum, the Navy has partnered with the Navy Museum Development Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving naval history. A law also provides the opportunity for Congress to match funds raised by a nonprofit foundation for the purpose of financing a national museum.

The national museums of the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force have all benefited from this statutory provision.

MILITARY

platoons: About 130 drones used in exercise so units could see farther

FROM PAGE 1

commemorate the 80th anniversary of the country's liberation in 1944 from Japanese occupation and to begin planning joint army exercises for 2025.

The new squad vehicle, designed to carry nine soldiers, is manufactured by GM Defense, a subsidiary of General Motors.

It is based on the Chevrolet Colorado ZR2 Bison and powered by a 2.8-liter engine. It is quiet, fuel-efficient and small enough to be loaded into a Chinook or Stallion helicopter and light enough to be sling-loaded under a Black Hawk helicopter, an Army fact sheet says.

The squad vehicles are part of the Army's "Transforming in Contact" initiative, which aims to rapidly put the newest technology into the hands of soldiers to make them more lethal, survivable and

adaptable in any environment.

The concept is being tested using brigade combat teams with the 25th, 101st Airborne and 10th Mountain divisions, according to an Army fact sheet.

The service is in the process of validating the new squad vehicles, by which equipment is tested and evaluated to confirm it meets performance and safety standards before being fully deployed.

As part of the Transforming in Contact initiative, about 130 short-range reconnaissance drones were used during the Hawaii exercise, Evans said.

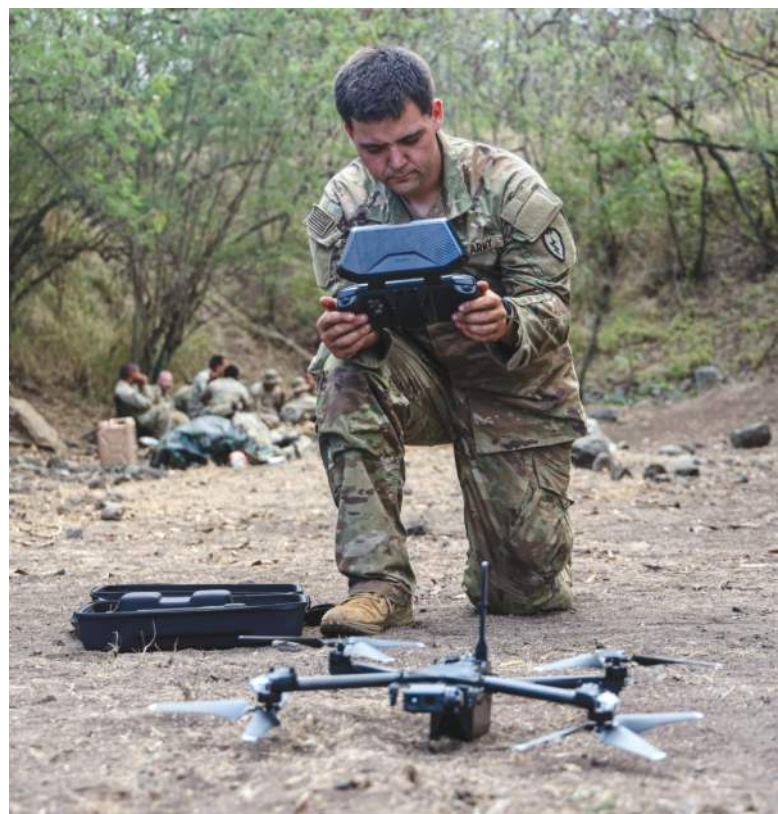
"What that provides is the ability to see farther than an organic rifle platoon or rifle company has been able to see in the past — with assets that they control," he said. "So, generally, they can see up to about three kilometers and be able to inform how they maneuver and gain positions of advantage."

The squad vehicles and drones "have increased the overall lethality of the formation, as well as the survivability," an outcome witnessed during the the Hawaii exercise, he said.

"What we were able to see on the final attack were these small elements that were able to infiltrate either on Infantry Squad Vehicles or a combination of rotary-wing aircraft and identify enemy nodes or enemy capabilities such as a counterattack force through their employment of [unmanned aerial vehicles]," he said.

They could then "enable a strike solution that supported the overall brigade," he said.

"So, when you combine seeing, sensing and striking in a very small and equally important agile formation, it creates opportunities to gain positions of advantage for the maneuvering forces," Evans said.



BRENDEN DELGADO/U.S. Army

Army Spc. Brendan Nicholas, an infantryman assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, prepares to launch a Skydio X10D drone at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, earlier this month during a Joint Pacific Multinational Training Center exercise.

Blasts: Training can expose troops to hundreds of explosions

FROM PAGE 1

According to the department's Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence, more than 20,000 service members were diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries last year.

More than 500,000 have been diagnosed since 2000.

Josh Wick, a Pentagon spokesperson, said emerging information from evaluations of both acute blasts and repetitive low-level exposures shows links to adverse effects, such as the inability to sleep, degraded cognitive performance, headaches and dizziness.

"Our top priority remains our forces' long-term cognitive well-being and operational effectiveness as warfighters," said Gen. Bryan Fenton, head of U.S. Special Operations Command. "We are committed to understanding and identifying the impacts of blast overpressure on our personnel's brain health."

Fenton said research with academics and medical and industry experts is helping find ways to mitigate and treat overpressure. He said cutting-edge technologies are key to reducing the effects of repeated exposures, such as those many of his troops experience.

Out in a remote training area for Army special forces at Fort Liberty in North Carolina, commandos used what they call a Muchete breaching charge, specifically formed into a shape that more precisely directs the blasts and limits the harmful waves coming from an explosion. A small number of journalists were allowed to watch the training.

"The reduction on the blast overpressure coming back on the operator on average is generally between 40 and 60%," said Chris Wilson, who leads the team at the command that oversees clinical research and other performance-related initiatives. "It really also depends on where somebody is standing. But it's certainly a pretty dramatic reduction in the exposure. So I think that's a win."

Wilson said development and testing of the refined charge is ongoing but that units are using this one now in training until one gets final approval and can be more widely distributed.

Because of the extensive amount of training for special operations forces — both to hone their skills and to prepare for specific operations — troops may practice breaching a door dozens or hundreds of times. As a result, training is where they are most likely to have such repeated exposures.

The command wants a better sense of how each person is affected.

During the demonstration, a number of the Army special forces soldiers were wearing small monitors or sensors to help leaders better understand the level of blast pressure that troops are absorbing. The sensors allow officials to compare readings based on where troops were standing and how close they were to the blast.

The command is evaluating a number of blast sensors on the market, and some higher risk troops are already using them.

Testing and other studies are continuing with the goal of getting them out across the force in the next couple of years.

According to Wilson and Col. Amanda Robbins, the command's psychologist, there are distinct differences between acute traumatic brain injuries and what is called long-term blast exposure or blast overpressure.

Traumatic brain injuries, they said, are acute injuries that are relatively well documented and diagnosed.

They said repetitive blast exposure needs more attention because there are lots of questions about the impact on the human brain. The damage is far more complex to diagnose and requires more study to establish links between the repetitive blasts and any damage or symptoms.

To aid the research, Special Operations Command is looking at doing more routine testing throughout service members' careers.

One test is a neurocognitive assessment that the command does every three years. Officials also want warfighters to be assessed if they have had a concussion or similar event.

The Defense Department more broadly will require cognitive assessments for all new recruits as part of an effort to protect troops from brain injuries resulting from blast exposures. New guidance released in August requires greater use of protective equipment, minimum "stand-off distances" during certain types of training, and a reduction in the number of people in

proximity to blasts.

The other test being done by Special Operations Command is a more subjective comprehensive assessment that catalogs each person's history of injuries or falls, even as a child. It's done early to get a baseline.

Robbins said what they have seen is that new, younger operators and those with 20 or more years of experience are more

amenable to doing the testing.

"The challenge is going to be in the midcareer operators who may be more concerned about self-reporting potentially having a perceived negative impact," she said.

She added that the assessment is a way to take into account incidents that may not be in their medical records, so that problems can be identified early on and people can get treatment.

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EUROPE



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Susan Harris-Boring, right, helps students with their writing this month during one of five sixth grade language arts classes she teaches at Kaiserslautern Middle School in Germany.

It is written: K-town teacher named tops among DODEA

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Susan Harris-Boring rarely stays in one place when teaching sixth graders language arts at Kaiserslautern Middle School.

She starts at a desk as students line up to show her writing drafts about their career goals. Later on, she's circling the room while checking everyone's progress. She pulls up a chair to offer a student some extra help.

"Nice, look at that, that's lovely, I'm very impressed with that," she says.

In just her sixth year of teaching, Harris-Boring, 46, has been named the 2025 Department of Defense Education Activity Teacher of the Year.

Winning was a complete surprise, she said. Teachers and students at Kaiserslautern Middle School celebrated the award with her at an assembly earlier this month.

Harris-Boring will enter the National Teacher of the Year competition and be recognized at a White House ceremony sometime next year.

"I am excited for the opportunity to take what is going on in Europe, what is going on in the Kaiserslautern district, to showcase and highlight that ... and get some of the voices of these military-connected kids out," she said.

She also gets to take a semester-long sabbatical to design and implement a project of choice, which is something she's still choosing.

Harris-Boring's "profound belief that every student deserves to feel valued and respected creates an environment that encourages both personal and academic growth," DODEA director Beth Schiavino-Narvaez said in a statement.

Her students notice that enthusiasm.

"I love that she's always understanding and she's always fun, and always excited, and she's always ready to help," said Colt Lokey, 11. "And she always uses empathy in what she says. She helps me a lot and understands how I need to write."

Harris-Boring honed her writing skills while earning bachelor's degrees in journalism and film studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The spouse of a retired Air Force master sergeant, Harris-Boring bounced around working small journalism jobs and in film production while her husband was active duty.

"With every PCS, it became more difficult" to find



Harris-Boring looks at notes about current events that her students post in her classroom and she uses to help them practice writing.

a career, she said, referring to the military acronym for changing assignments every few years. "You have to start over again."

She started volunteering in her classroom years ago because of her daughter, who graduated earlier this year from Kaiserslautern High School.

"I stepped into the door of her elementary school, and it was where I was supposed to be," she said. "I love working with kids."

Nine years ago, the family landed in Germany. Harris-Boring earned a master's degree in teaching and began working as a paraprofessional for DODEA, before eventually getting a full-time job as a middle school social studies and language arts teacher.

In 2021, Harris-Boring volunteered to teach English to Afghans passing through Germany during Operation Allies Refuge, earning a public service commendation medal from the U.S. Army.

One of her goals is to get students to enjoy writing as much as she does.

"I am constantly telling them anything they ever want to achieve in life, if they can figure out how to express themselves with the written word ... there's nothing that they can't achieve," she said.

It takes lots of practice and sometimes the students see writing as a chore.

"We have to flip that thinking," Harris-Boring said. "It's a challenge to get them to take ownership, to be proud of the words that they compose."

"Speaking is very important but the written word is permanent. Writing — the ability to express yourself — is truly a superpower."

Poland continues big spending for bases, US troops

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Poland continues to deliver on in-kind contributions that support the American military presence in the country, with Warsaw in the year ahead expected to spend nearly \$200 million on upgrades at bases used by U.S. forces.

The Polish expenditures, detailed in the U.S. Senate's version of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2025, mark the latest round of initiatives aimed at enhancing the bases.

Last year, Poland agreed to fund \$300 million on various projects, including \$93 million for ongoing work to build a new Army barracks and a dining facility in Powidz, a major logistical hub for the U.S. military in Poland.

Among allies in Europe, Poland is the only NATO member singled out in the NDAA for making in-kind contributions to the U.S. mission on the Continent.

The projects in Poland are part of a bilateral security agreement

that calls for Poland to pick up a large amount of the infrastructure costs needed to support U.S. troops in the country.

The Polish contributions in 2025 include efforts at Lask Air Base, where the U.S. Air Force maintains a steady rotational presence. Construction there adds up to \$132 million to support drone and surveillance operations, as well as corresponding taxiway, hangar and communications upgrades needed to support such missions, the NDAA stated.

Separately, Warsaw will spend \$56 million on force protection and communications at a base in Wroclaw used for moving U.S. military supplies into Poland.

In recent years, the U.S. has expanded operations in Poland, which has emerged as the center of gravity for missions aimed at deterring Russian aggression on NATO's eastern flank. In March 2023, the U.S. solidified Poland's growing status within NATO when the U.S. Army established its first permanent garrison in the country.

In Kyiv, Austin announces \$400M in new Ukraine aid

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in a surprise visit to Kyiv on Monday announced another \$400 million in munitions, armored vehicles and anti-tank weapons for Ukrainian troops fighting to defeat invading Russian forces.

The announcement came during his meeting with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"During the meeting we discussed critical defense priorities, including Ukraine's air-defense capabilities, preparations for the winter period, and the expansion of long-range weapon use against Russian military targets," Zelenskyy said in a post on X. "Additionally, we focused on efforts to increase the production of strike drones, cruise missiles, artillery shells and air-defense systems."

The new aid follows the U.S. announcement last week of plans to provide \$425 million in air-defense weapons, air-to-ground missiles, armored vehicles and other munitions.

Last week, Zelenskyy outlined a "victory plan" for ending the conflict in Ukraine by next year. The

plan includes a formal invitation for Ukraine to join NATO and permission to use Western long-range missiles to strike military targets in Russia — two steps that allies have been reluctant to support previously, The Associated Press reported.

U.S. backing is crucial for Zelenskyy to get support from other allies for his proposals, which he believes are necessary to strengthen Ukraine's position on the battlefield and ahead of any peace negotiations, according to the AP. But analysts have said President Joe Biden's administration is unlikely to make a decision before the U.S. presidential election Nov. 5 because it might not appeal to voters.

Pentagon officials earlier this month said more than 600,000 Russian troops have been killed or injured since the Kremlin launched its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Austin's trip to Kyiv marks his fourth visit to Ukraine and will likely be his last as the defense secretary.

The U.S. has provided about \$59.5 billion in military aid to Ukraine since Russian forces invaded in February 2022.

NATION

Mideast conflict looms over presidential race

By ZEKE MILLER
AND JOEY CAPPELLETTI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two weeks out from Election Day, the crisis in the Middle East is looming over the race for the White House, with one candidate struggling to find just the right words to navigate its difficult cross-currents and the other making bold pronouncements that the age-old conflict can quickly be set right.

Vice President Kamala Harris has been painstakingly — and not always successfully — trying to balance talk of strong support for Israel with harsh condemnations of civilian casualties among Palestinians and others caught up in Israel's wars against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Former President Donald Trump, for his part, insists that none of this would have happened on his watch and that he can make it all go away if elected.

Both of them are bidding for the votes of Arab and Muslim American voters and Jewish voters, particularly in extremely tight races in the battleground states of Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Harris over the weekend alternately drew praise and criticism over her comments about a pro-Palestinian protester that were captured on a widely shared video. Some took Harris' remark that the protester's concerns were "real" to be an expression of agreement with his description of Israel's conduct as "genocide." That drew sharp condemnation from Israel's former ambassador to the U.S., Michael Oren.

But Harris' campaign said that while the vice president was agreeing more generally about the plight of civilians in Gaza, she was not and would not accuse Israel of genocide.

A day earlier, the dynamics were reversed when Harris told reporters that the "first and most tragic story" of the conflict was the



NELL REDMOND/AP

Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Concord, N.C., on Monday.

Oct. 7 Hamas attack last year that killed about 1,200 Israelis. That was triggering to those who feel she is not giving proper weight to the deaths of the more than 41,000 Palestinians who have been killed in Gaza.

Trump, meanwhile, in recent days has participated in interviews with Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya and Lebanese outlet MTV, where he promised to bring about peace and said "things will turn out very well" in Lebanon.

In a post on his social media platform Monday, he predicted a Harris presidency would only make matters in the Mideast worse.

"If Kamala gets four more years, the Middle East will spend the next four decades going up in flames, and your kids will be going off to War, maybe even a Third World War, something that will never happen with President Donald J. Trump in charge," Trump posted. "For our Country's sake, and for your kids, Vote Trump for PEACE!"

Harris' position is particularly awkward because as vice president she is tethered to President Joe Biden's foreign policy decisions even as she's tried to strike a more empathetic tone to all parties. But Harris aides and allies also are frustrated with what they see as Trump largely getting a pass on some of his unpredictable foreign policy statements.

"It's the very thoughtful, very careful school versus the showboat," said James Zogby, founder and president of the Arab American Institute, who has endorsed Harris. "That does become a handicap in these late stages when he's making all these overtures. When the bill comes due they're going to walk away empty-handed, but by then it'll be too late."

The political divisions on the campaign trail augur potentially significant implications after Election Day as powers in the region, particularly Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, closely eye the outcome and the potential for any shifts to U.S. foreign policy.



MORRY GASH/AP

Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris attends a campaign event Monday in Brookfield, Wis.

A new AP-NORC poll finds that neither Trump nor Harris has a clear political advantage on the situation in the Middle East. About 4 in 10 registered voters say Trump would do a better job, and a similar share say that about Harris. Roughly 2 in 10 say neither candidate would do a better job.

There are some signs of weakness on the issue for Harris within her own party, however. Only about two-thirds of Democratic voters say Harris would be the better candidate to handle the situation in the Middle East. Among Republicans, about 8 in 10 say Trump would be better.

In Michigan, which has the nation's largest concentration of Arab Americans, the Israel-Hamas war has profound and personal impacts on the community. In addition to many community members having family in both Lebanon and Gaza, Kamel Ahmad Jawad, a metro Detroit resident, was killed while trying to deliver aid to his hometown in southern Lebanon.

The war's direct impact on the community has fueled outrage and calls for the U.S. to demand an unconditional cease-fire and impose a weapons embargo on Israel.

Although both parties have largely supported Israel, much of the outrage and blame has been directed at Biden. When Harris entered the race, many Arab American leaders initially felt a renewed sense of optimism, citing her past comments and the early outreach efforts of her campaign.

However, that optimism quickly faded as the community perceived that she had not sufficiently distanced her policies from those of Biden.

"To say to Arab Americans, 'Trump is going to be worse' — what is worse than having members of your family killed?" said Rima Meroueh, director of the National Network for Arab American Communities. "That's what people are saying when they're asked the question, 'Isn't Trump going to be worse?' It can't be worse than what's happening to us right now."

Musk offers \$1M a day to sign petition backing the Constitution

By MIKE CATALINI
Associated Press

Elon Musk, the billionaire founder of Tesla and Space X and owner of X who's gone all-in on Republican Donald Trump's candidacy for the White House, has already committed at least \$70 million to help the former president. Now he's pledging to give away \$1 million a day to voters for signing his political action committee's petition backing the Constitution.

The giveaway is raising questions and alarms among some election experts who say it is a violation of the law to link a cash handout to signing a petition that also requires a person to be registered



Musk

Sunday.

"I think there are real questions with how he is spending money in this race, how the dark money is flowing, not just into Pennsylvania, but apparently now into the pockets of Pennsylvanians. That is deeply concerning," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Musk promised on Saturday

to vote.

Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, the state's former attorney general, expressed concern about the plan on

that he would give away \$1 million a day, until the Nov. 5 election, for people signing his PAC's petition supporting the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech, and the Second Amendment, with its right "to keep and bear arms." He awarded a check during an event Saturday in Harrisburg, Pa., to a man identified as John Dreher. A message left with a number listed for Dreher was not returned Sunday. Musk gave out another check Sunday.

However, some election law experts are raising red flags about the giveaway. Brendan Fischer, a campaign finance lawyer, said the latest iteration of Musk's give-

away approaches a legal boundary. That's because the PAC is requiring registration as a prerequisite to become eligible for the \$1 million check. "There would be few doubts about the legality if every Pennsylvania-based petition signer were eligible, but conditioning the payments on registration arguably violates the law," Fischer said in an email.

Rick Hasen, a UCLA Law School political science professor, went further. He pointed to a law that prohibits paying people for registering to vote or for voting. "If all he was doing was paying people to sign the petition, that might be a waste of money. But

there's nothing illegal about it," Hasen said in a telephone interview. "The problem is that the only people eligible to participate in this giveaway are the people who are registered to vote. And that makes it illegal."

Michael Kang, an election law professor at Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law, said the context of the giveaway so close to Election Day makes it harder to make the case that the effort is anything but an incentivizing people to register to vote.

"It's not quite the same as paying someone to vote, but you're getting close enough that we worry about its legality," Kang said.

NATION

11 pro-Palestinian protesters arrested on Minn. campus

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Police arrested about a dozen pro-Palestinian protesters Monday at the University of Minnesota after a group of students entered an administrative building, university officials said.

The Monday afternoon protest prompted an alert from school officials.

Ryan Mattson, a media liaison with the university's chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, said some protesters who were inside the building were arrested. He did not initially know how many were arrested, but university officials released a statement saying 11 people were taken into custody less than two hours after they entered Morrill Hall.

Merlin Van Alstein, an organizer with the group, earlier said about 30 protesters occupied Morrill Hall, while a larger group gathered outside.

The group renamed the building "Halimy Hall," in remembrance of 19-year-old Palestinian TikTok content creator Medo Halimy, who died in August in an apparent Israeli airstrike.

The protesters were equipped with tents and supplies, and said they planned to stay until their demands are met. They were demanding that the university divest from Israel and repeal its political neutrality agreement. Video posted online showed chairs and other patio furniture stacked in front of an exterior window of the building.

"We plan to stay until they forcibly remove us," Van Alstein said before the arrests. "The people inside aren't going to leave until they meet our demands or they are forced to leave."

The university said that once inside the building, protesters covered lenses of internal security cameras with spray paint, broke some interior windows, and barricaded entrances and exits.

Earlier Monday, the group shared a video to Facebook of a speaker's announcement that its members were occupying the building but not restricting anyone from exiting or entering. The speaker appeared in front of a large sign reading, "Money for education, not for bombs & occupation."

Report: Abortion tally similar to before Roe was overturned

Associated Press

Women living in states with abortion bans obtained the procedure in the second half of 2023 at about the same rate as before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, according to a report released Tuesday.

Women did so by traveling out of state or by having prescription abortion pills mailed to them, according to the #WeCount report from the Society of Family Planning, which advocates for abortion access. They increasingly used telehealth, the report found, as medical providers in states with laws intended to protect them from prosecution in other states used online appointments to prescribe abortion pills.

"The abortion bans are not eliminating the need for abortion," said Ushma Upadhyay, a University of California, San Francisco public health social scientist and a co-chair of the survey. "People are jumping over these hurdles because they have to."

The #WeCount report began surveying abortion providers across the country monthly just

before Roe was overturned, creating a snapshot of abortion trends. In some states, a portion of the data is estimated. The report has chronicled quick shifts since the Supreme Court's 2022 ruling that opened the door to enforcement of state bans.

The number of abortions in states with bans at all stages of pregnancy fell to near zero. It also plummeted in states where bans kick in around six weeks of pregnancy, which is before many women know they're pregnant.

But the nationwide total has been about the same or above the level from before the ruling.

The study estimates 99,000 abortions occurred each month in the first half of 2024, up from the 81,000 monthly from April through December 2022 and 88,000 in 2023.

One reason is telehealth, which got a boost when some Democratic-controlled states began implementing laws to protect prescribers. In April 2022, about 1 in 25 abortions were from pills prescribed via telehealth, the report found. In June 2024, it was 1 in 5.



TED SHAFFREY/AP

A demonstrator waves a flag on the Columbia University campus at a pro-Palestinian protest encampment, in New York, on April 29. This semester, some of the most visible demonstrations have involved professors speaking up for the right to protest itself.

New protest rules spur an outcry from college faculty

BY ANNIE MA
Associated Press

Dissent is thriving this fall at American colleges, and not just among student activists. With student protests limited by new restrictions, faculty have taken up the cause.

To faculty, new protest rules threaten freedom of speech — and the freedom to think, both central to university life. This semester, some of the most visible demonstrations have involved professors speaking up for the right to protest itself.

Last spring, pro-Palestinian tent encampments crowded schools and disrupted commencement plans, drawing accusations of antisemitism and prompting new limits.

At Indiana University, an "expressive activity policy" rolled out in August prohibits protests after 11 p.m., bans camping on campus, and requires pre-approval for signs. In defiance, each Sunday a group of faculty members, students and community members gather on campus for candlelight vigils that extend past the 11 p.m. deadline.

Russ Skiba, a professor emeritus who has attended the vigils, said the new restrictions are part of a larger movement to limit academic freedom on campuses.

In Indiana, the Republican governor in March signed a law increasing state oversight of public universities.

The law, sponsored by a lawmaker who said colleges suffer from "monolithic thinking," subjects faculty to post-tenure reviews over whether they are fostering diversity of thought and keeping their political views out

of the classroom.

Skiba and other Indiana professors widely opposed the bill, which they criticized as vague and subject to interpretation.

"Universities are bastions of free speech, but when you have a movement that is anti-democratic, one of the places that is most attacked is freedom of speech," Skiba said.

Faculty members at colleges elsewhere have pushed back on the new rules with protests, vigils and demands for explanation.

A group of Harvard University professors held a "study-in" at a campus library on Oct. 16 in support of pro-Palestinian students who were temporarily banned from the library for holding a similar demonstration.

In September, a group representing University of California faculty filed a complaint alleging the system sought to chill their academic freedom and keep them from teaching about the Israel-Hamas war "in a way that does not align with the University's own position."

To some professors, the protest restrictions are also a labor issue.

Colleges have been granting tenure to fewer professors, and facing pressure in some areas to do away with it altogether. Legislatures in several states have taken an interest in how topics are taught. Protest guidelines handed down by administrators are another way the faculty's say in university affairs is being diminished, some professors say.

Tensions on campuses nationwide have been high since the war began over a year ago, when Hamas-led militants stormed into

southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and abducting around 250. Israel's offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Colleges have been under tremendous pressure, including from Republicans in Congress, to protect students from discrimination while upholding free speech. Demonstrations last spring blocked foot traffic in parts of some campuses and included instances of antisemitic imagery and rhetoric. Some Jewish faculty members and students have said the protests made them feel unsafe.

In a message announcing new guidelines at the start of the semester, Northwestern University President Michael Schill said it needs to make sure everyone on campus feels safe and supported.

"Activities that lead to intimidation and impede an environment where dialogue and education can flourish cannot occur again," he said.

While schools say the rules are meant to limit disruptions, faculty members say they have the effect of neutralizing dissent.

"The whole point of a protest is to be seen and heard," said Michael Thaddeus, a mathematics professor at Columbia University, where new rules require advance notice and prevent demonstrations that "substantially inhibit the primary purposes" of an area of campus. "Free speech rights aren't served if you can only speak into the void and not have anybody hear you, and that includes the right to be seen and heard by people who don't like what you have to say."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

At least 2 dead, hundreds rescued from flooding

NM ROSWELL — Authorities in New Mexico rescued hundreds of people in the Roswell area after record rainfall produced severe flooding that stranded many and left at least two people dead.

New Mexico National Guard officials said 309 people had been rescued since Saturday, with 38 of those taken to hospitals for treatment of injuries. New Mexico State Police said two people died as a result of the flash flood, but information on the victims or the circumstances of their deaths wasn't immediately released.

Albuquerque TV station KOAT reported that Chaves County Sheriff Mike Herrington was seen standing on top of his vehicle surrounded by floodwaters. Herrington said he had to go to the roof of his vehicle when it and several other vehicles became stranded in water that rose up to the windows.

Roswell city officials said water levels had receded in many parts of the city but remained high in the downtown area. All roads leading to and from the city were closed Sunday, authorities said.

Helo crash in Houston kills 4, destroys tower

TX HOUSTON — A helicopter crashed Sunday in Houston, killing four people on board and destroying a radio tower, officials said.

The helicopter went down just before 8 p.m. after taking off from Ellington Field, Mayor John Whitmire said at a news conference. He didn't know its destination.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it was investigating the crash of the Robinson R44 II helicopter.

The private helicopter with four people on board, including a child, either struck a cable or the tower, Houston Police Chief J. Noe Diaz said at the news conference. As far as officials know, there was no one on the ground when the crash occurred, he said. The identities of the victims and their ages have not yet been released.

2 arrested after 200 minks released from farm

PA SUNBURY — Two people are facing charges following the release of about 200 minks from cages at a central Pennsylvania fur farm.

Most of the animals were recovered, according to an official, unlike a similar incident just over a year ago in which thousands of minks were released into the surrounding area.

State police in Northumberland County say troopers were called shortly before 1 a.m. Saturday after a report that two people had been caught on camera releasing the minks at the Richard H. Stahl Sons Inc. farm in Rockefeller Township outside of Sunbury.



RODRIGO ABD/AP

Family flight

Passengers bask in the sunshine while waiting to board their plane in Terminal 3 of Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport on Sunday.

Two Massachusetts residents were arrested on charges of agricultural vandalism, criminal mischief involving property damage, theft, burglary, trespass and animal cruelty. They were taken to the county jail.

The Vessel reopens with new safety features

NY NEW YORK — The Vessel, a towering, honeycomb-like sculpture in Manhattan that was popular with tourists before a series of suicides forced its closure in 2021, reopened Monday with new safety features.

The 150-foot structure opened in 2019 as the centerpiece of the Hudson Yards development on Manhattan's West Side. The climbable sculpture with zigzagging stairs drew crowds of tourists.

Related Cos, which owns Hudson Yards, said it now has floor-to-ceiling steel mesh barriers installed on parts of it. Only the upper level sections that have been fitted with mesh will reopen and the top level will remain closed. Tickets are required.

Whooping cough at decade-high level in US

WI MILWAUKEE — Whooping cough is at its highest level in a decade for this time of year, U.S. health officials reported last week.

There have been 18,506 cases of

whooping cough reported so far, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. That's the most at this point in the year since 2014, when cases topped 21,800.

The increase is not unexpected — whooping cough peaks every three to five years, health experts said. And the numbers indicate a return to levels before the coronavirus pandemic, when whooping cough and other contagious illnesses plummeted.

Still, the tally has some state health officials concerned, including those in Wisconsin, where there have been about 1,000 cases so far this year, compared to a total of 51 last year.

One of last Navajo Code Talkers dies at 107

AZ WINDOW ROCK — John Kinsel Sr., one of the last remaining Navajo Code Talkers who transmitted messages during World War II based on the tribe's native language, has died. He was 107.

Tribal President Buu Nygren has ordered all flags on the reservation to be flown at half-staff until Oct. 27 to honor Kinsel. With Kinsel's death, only two Navajo Code Talkers are still alive: Former Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald and Thomas H. Begay.

Hundreds of Navajos were recruited by the Marines to serve as Code Talkers during the war, transmitting messages based on their then-unwritten native lan-

guage. They confounded Japanese military cryptologists during World War II and participated in all assaults the Marines led in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945, including at Guadalcanal to Iwo Jima.

The Code Talkers sent thousands of messages without error on Japanese troop movements, battlefield tactics and other communications crucial to the war's ultimate outcome.

Cost of preparing for executions climbs to \$1M

ID BOISE — The cost to maintain Idaho's execution capabilities has grown to nearly \$1.3 million, according to the state's prison system.

The Idaho Department of Correction issued notice last week of changes to its procedures for lethal injection. They included construction of an "execution preparation room" just before prisoners enter the execution chamber at the state's maximum security prison south of Boise.

There, execution team members, with help from a "qualified physician," will decide whether to use a standard IV, or heightened means to inject the lethal chemicals. The director of prisons recently helped enshrine use of a central line IV, which he previously called essentially a "surgical procedure," for a lethal injection if a prisoner's veins are deemed nonviable for execution purposes.

The policy and infrastructure

updates came nearly eight months after Idaho prison officials called off the execution of death row prisoner Thomas Creech by lethal injection after about an hour because the execution "medical team" could not find a suitable vein for an IV.

Ex-United Way worker guilty of taking \$6.7M

NH CONCORD — A man who worked for United Way in Massachusetts was convicted of taking \$6.7 million from the nonprofit through an information technology company that he secretly owned.

Imran Alrai, 59, was convicted last week in federal court in Concord of 12 counts of wire fraud and six counts of money laundering.

Prosecutors said that between 2012 and June 2018, Alrai, an IT professional at United Way, obtained the payments for IT services provided by an independent outside contractor. They said Alrai misrepresented facts about the contractor and concealed that he owned the business.

For the next five years, while serving as United Way's Vice President for IT Services, Alrai steered additional IT work to his company, prosecutors said. They said he routinely sent emails with attached invoices from a fictitious person to himself at United Way.

NATION

Low-priced new cars gaining popularity among buyers

By TOM KRISHER
Associated Press

DETROIT — Had she wanted to, Michelle Chumley could have afforded a pricey new SUV loaded with options. But when it came time to replace her Chevrolet Blazer SUV, for which she'd paid about \$40,000 three years ago, Chumley chose something smaller. And less costly.

With her purchase of a Chevrolet Trax compact SUV in June, Chumley joined a rising number of buyers who have made vehicles in the below-average \$20,000-to-\$30,000 range the fastest-growing segment of the nation's new-auto market.

"I just don't need that big vehicle and to be paying all of that gas money," said Chumley, a 56-year-old nurse who lives outside Oxford, Ohio, near Cincinnati.

Across the industry, auto analysts say, an "affordability shift" is taking root. The trend is being led by people who feel they can no longer afford a new vehicle that would cost them roughly today's average selling price of more than \$47,000 — a jump of more than 20% from the pre-pandemic average.

To buy a new car at that price, an average buyer would have to



JEFF DEAN/AP

Michelle Chumley poses with her new Chevrolet Trax compact SUV last month in West Chester, Ohio.

spend \$737 a month, if financed at today's average loan rate of 7.1%, for just under six years before the vehicle would be paid off, according to Edmunds.com, an auto research and pricing site. For many, that is financially out of reach.

Yet there are other buyers who, like Chumley, could manage the financial burden but have decided it just isn't worth the cost. And the trend is forcing America's automakers to reassess their sales and

production strategies. With buyers confronting inflated prices and still-high loan rates, sales of new U.S. autos rose only 1% through September over the same period last year. If the trend toward lower-priced vehicles proves a lasting one, more generous discounts could lead to lower average auto prices and slowing industry profits.

"Consumers are becoming more prudent as they face eco-

nomie uncertainty, still-high interest rates and vehicle prices that remain elevated," said Kevin Roberts, director of market intelligence at CarGurus, an automotive shopping site. "This year, all of the growth is happening in what we would consider the more affordable price buckets."

Under pressure to unload their more expensive models, automakers have been lowering the sales prices on many such vehicles, largely by offering steeper discounts. In the past year, the average incentive per auto has nearly doubled, to \$1,812, according to Edmunds.

General Motors said it kept discounts in check and average vehicle prices steady around \$49,000 from July through September. That produced a \$900 million pretax earnings gain from a year ago, but the company doesn't expect that in the fourth quarter.

Through September, Roberts has calculated, new-vehicle sales to individual buyers, excluding sales to rental companies and other commercial fleets, are up 7%. Of that growth, 43% came in the \$20,000-to-\$30,000 price range — the largest share for that price category in at least four years. (For used vehicles, the shift is even

more pronounced: 59% sales growth in the \$15,000-to-\$20,000 price range over that period.)

Sales of compact and subcompact cars and SUVs from mainstream auto brands are growing faster than in any year since 2018, according to data from Cox Automotive.

The sales gains for affordable vehicles is, in some ways, a return to a pattern that existed before the pandemic. As recently as 2018, compact and subcompact vehicles — typically among the most popular moderately priced vehicles — had accounted for nearly 35% of the nation's new vehicle sales.

The proportion started to fall in 2020, when the pandemic caused a global shortage of computer chips that forced automakers to slow production and allocate scarce semiconductors to more expensive trucks and large SUVs. As buyers increasingly embraced those higher-priced vehicles, the companies posted robust earnings growth.

In the meantime, they deemed profit margins for lower-priced cars too meager to justify significant production of them. By 2022, the market share of compact and subcompact vehicles had dropped below 30%.

Teen in custody after 5 found dead Washington state shooting

Associated Press

FALL CITY, Wash. — Law enforcement officials found five people killed in a shooting inside a home southeast of Seattle on Monday morning and took a teenager into custody, police said.

Several people called 911 around 5 a.m. to report a shooting in Fall City, King County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Mike Mellis said at a briefing Monday.

Arriving deputies immediately took one teen into custody while another teenager who had been hurt was taken to a Seattle hospital, Mellis said. Both teens live at the house, Mellis said.

Deputies entering the home found the bodies of five people, he said.

Two were adults and three were described by Mellis as young teenagers. No names have been re-

leased yet.

"Once bodies were discovered, clearly we understand that this is a hugely significant crime scene," he said.

Mellis said the shooting appears to involve members of a family, but added that they didn't yet know how they were related. He also said there was no ongoing threat to the community.

"I have no reason to think that

there will be any additional arrests," he said.

The teen in custody was booked into King County's juvenile detention facility, according to Mellis. The teen will appear in court for a first hearing on Tuesday or Wednesday, a spokesperson for the county Prosecuting Attorney's Office said in an email.

A neighbor told KING-TV that a couple and their five children

lived in the home.

"I'm just in total shock, I keep bursting into tears," Lynne Trowern, told the news outlet.

An emailed statement Monday evening from King County Councilmember Sarah Perry said the shooting involved a family of seven people. Sheriff Patricia Cole-Tindall told KING-TV that she was "very sad, very disturbed" to learn about the shooting.

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STARS AND STRIPES

WORLD

Poland alleges Russian sabotage, is closing one of Moscow's consulates

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's foreign minister said Tuesday that he is ordering the closure of one of three Russian consulates in the country in response to acts of sabotage that he said were sponsored by Moscow.

Radek Sikorski demanded that Russia stop what he called hybrid war actions against Poland and its western allies, warning that Poland reserves the right "to take further decisive action" if they don't stop.

"As the minister of foreign affairs, I have information that the Russian Federation is behind attempts at sabotage, both in Poland and in allied countries," Sikorski told reporters in Warsaw.

He said he was withdrawing consent for the Russian Consulate in Poznan, and that its personnel would be unwelcome in Poland. Russia also has consulates in Gdansk and Krakow.

Russian Foreign Ministry

spokeswoman Maria Zakharova promised "a painful response to yet another hostile act" in comments to state news agency RIA Novosti.

Sikorski cited the arrest in January of a Ukrainian citizen who he said has admitted that Russian agents told him to carry out an arson attack in the city of Wroclaw. The attack was foiled, and the 51-year-old man, identified only as Serhii S., is awaiting a court trial.

Sikorski alleged that about 20 such sabotage suspects are under investigation in Poland, and that he has knowledge of other such arson plans in allied countries.

The pro-European Union government in Warsaw says Russia is pursuing acts of hybrid war against Poland and other Western countries in retaliation for their support for Poland's neighbor Ukraine in its struggle against Russia's invasion.

Israel levels building near Beirut as Blinken seeks Gaza cease-fire

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The Israeli military leveled a building in a suburb of Beirut on Tuesday that it said housed Hezbollah "facilities," sending smoke and debris into the air a few hundred yards from where a spokesperson for the militant group had just briefed journalists about a weekend drone attack that damaged the Israeli prime minister's house.

The airstrike came 40 minutes after Israel issued an evacuation warning for two buildings in the area that it said were used by Hezbollah. The Hezbollah press conference nearby was cut short. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Hezbollah's chief spokesman, Mohammed Afif, said the group was behind the Saturday drone attack on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home in the coastal town of Caesarea. He hinted that it might attempt future strikes on Netanyahu's home. Israel has said

neither the prime minister nor his wife were home during the attack.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Tuesday with Netanyahu as part of his 11th visit to the region since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. After Israel's killing last week of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, Blinken is trying to revive efforts to secure a cease-fire in Gaza. So far, both Israel and Hamas appear to be digging in.

Netanyahu called his meeting with Blinken, which lasted more than two hours, "friendly and productive."

Blinken landed hours after Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets into central Israel, setting off air raid sirens, but causing no apparent damage or injuries.

An Israeli airstrike late Monday night in Beirut destroyed several buildings across the street from the country's largest public hospital, killing 18 people and wounding at least 60 others. The

Israeli military said it struck a Hezbollah target, without elaborating, and said that it hadn't targeted the hospital itself.

Associated Press reporters visited the Rafik Hariri University Hospital on Tuesday. They saw broken windows in the hospital's pharmacy and dialysis center, which was full of patients at the time.

During his meeting with Netanyahu, Blinken underscored the need for a dramatic increase in the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza, according to U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller.

Miller said Blinken also stressed the importance of ending the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, which escalated earlier this month when Israel launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon.

Blinken's visit to the region is likely to include stops in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE.

STARS AND STRIPES

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FACES

Demystifying the canon

Batiste's 'Beethoven Blues' transforms classical works into unique blues, gospel

By MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

When Grammy Award winner Jon Batiste was a kid, say, 9 or 10 years old, he moved between musical worlds — participating in local, classical piano competitions by day, then “gigging in night haunts in the heart of New Orleans.”

Free from the rigidity of genre, but also a dedicated student of it, his tastes wove into one another. He'd find himself transforming canonized classical works into blues or gospel songs, injecting them with the style-agnostic soulfulness he's become known for. On Nov. 15, Batiste will release his first album of solo piano work, a collection of similar compositions.

Titled “Beethoven Blues (Batiste Piano Series, Vol. 1),” across 11 tracks, Batiste collaborates, in a way, with Beethoven, reimagining the German pianist's instantly recognizable works into something fluid, extending across musical histories. Kicking off with the lead single “Für Elise-Batiste,” with its simple intro known the world over as one of the first pieces of music beginners learn on piano, he morphs the song into ebullient blues.

“My private practice has always been kind of in reverence to, of course, but also to demystify the mythology around these composers,” Batiste said.

The album was written through a process called “spontaneous composition,” which he views as a lost art in classical music. It's extemporization; Batiste sits at the piano and interpolates Beethoven's masterpieces to make them his own.



“Beethoven Blues” will be released on Nov. 15.

“The approach is to think about, if I were both in conversation with Beethoven, but also if Beethoven himself were here today, and he was sitting at the piano, what would the approach be?” he explained. “And blending both, you know, my approach to artistry and creativity and what my imagined approach of how a contemporary Beethoven would approach these works.”

There is a division, he said, in a popular understanding of music where “pristine and preserved and European” genres are viewed as more valuable than “something that's Black and sweaty and improvisational.” This album, like most of his work, disrupts the assumption.

Contrary to what many might think, Batiste said that Beethoven's rhythms are

African. “On a basic technical level, he's doing the thing that African music ingenuity brought to the world, which is he's playing in both a two meter and a three meter at once, almost all the time. He's playing in two different time signatures at once, almost exclusively,” he said.

“When you hear a drum circle, you know, the African diasporic tradition of playing in time together, you're hearing multiple different meters happening at once,” he continued. “In general, he's layering all of the practice of classical music and symphonic music with this deeply African rhythmic practice, so it's sophisticated.”

“Beethoven Blues” honors that complexity. “I'm deeply repelled by the classism and the culture system that we've set up that degrades some and elevates others. And ultimately the main thing that I'm drawn in by is how excellence transcends race,” he said.

When these songs are performed live, given their spontaneous nature, they will never sound exactly like they do on record, and no two sets will be the same. “If you were to come and see me perform these works 10 times in a row, you'd hear not only a new version of Beethoven, but you would also get a completely new concert of Beethoven,” he said.

“Beethoven Blues” is the first in a piano



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Jon Batiste says that he tried to imagine how Beethoven would approach his own music if he were here today.

series — how many will there be, and over what time frame, and what they will look like? Well, he's keeping his options open.

“The themes of the piano series are going to be based on, you know, whatever is timely for me in that moment of my development, whatever I'm exploring in terms of my artistry. It could be another series based on a composer,” he said. “Or it could be something completely different.”

New this week: Springsteen doc, Halsey album, 'Trap' thrills

Associated Press

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

Movies

One of the documentary standouts of the Sundance Film Festival, “The Remarkable Life of Ibelin” packs an emotional wallop. The film, winner of the audience award and the directing award for documentary at Sundance, is about Mats Steen, a quadriplegic Norwegian who died from a degenerative disorder at age 25. After his death, his parents discovered their son's life was far richer than they had imagined. To a wide World of Warcraft community, Steen was Ibelin Redwood, a cherished virtual friend. Much of the film, directed by Benjamin Ree (“The Painter and the Thief”), is told through War of Warcraft-style animation. Streaming Friday on Netflix.

There hasn't been a shortage of Bruce Springsteen documentaries in recent years, but “Road Diary: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band” (streaming Friday on Disney+ and Hulu), is a notable addition to the cottage industry of all things Bruce. The film is directed by Thom Zimny, who was also behind the docs “Western Stars” and “Springsteen on Broadway.” This one candidly captures the band on its 2023-2024 tour, with archival footage mixed in.

The M. Night Shyamalan-produced thriller “Caddo Lake” has been popular on Max, and the filmmaker's own “Trap” joins it Friday. In “Trap,” Josh Hartnett stars as a serial killer taking his teenage daughter to



NETFLIX, MAX, APPLE TV+/AP

Among this week's streaming releases, from left: The award-winning documentary “The Remarkable Life of Ibelin,” the third and final season of the series “Somebody Somewhere” and the series “Before.”

an arena popstar concert. The event, though, has been fashioned as, well, a trap to catch him.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Music

In June, Halsey revealed she'd been privately battling systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE, the most common form of lupus) and a rare T-cell lymphoproliferative disorder since 2022. On Friday, she'll release her fifth studio album, “The Great Impersonator,” written and recorded in that time, what she's publicly referred to as “the space between life and death.” Lyrically, the album touches on those themes — and musically, it is a great return to form for Halsey, an exploration of the music she deeply loves, done in her own fashion. There's the interpolation of Britney Spears on “Lucky,” the shoegaze-meets-nu-metal “Lonely is the Muse,” the pop-punky “Ego” and the folksy “The End.”

Also on Friday, Andrea Bocelli — ar-

guably the world's most recognizable tenor — will release “Duets” on the 30th anniversary of his debut album, 1994's “Il Mare Calmo della Sera.” Bocelli tackles his best known hits, now with new singing partners: Sarah Brightman on “Time to Say Goodbye,” Jennifer Lopez on “Quizás, Quizás, Quizás,” Céline Dion on “The Prayer,” and so on. It's all A-listers here: Ed Sheeran, Gwen Stefani, Chris Stapleton, Marc Anthony, Karol G and more makes appearances.

Country-pop star Kelsea Ballerini is in love. But her fifth studio album, “Patterns,” is no “happy-go-lucky, mushy, gushy record,” as she told The Associated Press this summer. Instead, it examines a breadth of human experience, specifically what she's identified as “learning how to go from fighting with something or with someone, to fighting for something or for someone.”

'N Sync's J.C. Chasez's first new album in 20 years, “Playing With Fire” alongside collaborator Jimmy Harry, is a musical theater concept album inspired by Mary Shelley's 1818 novel “Frankenstein.” It's an unusual mad lib, but it appears to center on grief and ambition — following a conversation between a dying Frankenstein and his monster at his wife's grave site. Musically, it marries Chasez's familiar falsetto, pop music and classical compositions.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Television

Another popular video game is getting the live-action treatment. “Like a Dragon: Yakuza,” is based on a Sega game released in 2005. It follows a powerful gangster named Kazuma Kiryu, (Ryoma Takeuchi),

who has a good heart and strong moral conviction — despite his ties to the mob. Kiryu's story unfolds in two timelines, 1995 when he is drawn into the yakuza and in 2005 as a made man. It debuts Thursday on Prime Video in subtitled and dubbed versions.

Social media star Nadia Caterina Munno, a chef known as The Pasta Queen, now has her own travel food show with the same name. Munno takes viewers on a tour of Italy and then into the kitchen where she demonstrates how to make authentic Italian dishes with fresh ingredients. “The Pasta Queen” drops Thursday on Prime Video.

Billy Crystal stars in a new series for Apple TV+ called “Before,” about a man grieving the death of his wife. A child therapist, Crystal's character Eli, finds himself drawn to a young boy (played by Jacobi Jupe) whom he realizes may carry past trauma that could help his own. The show also stars Judith Light and Rosie Perez. It premieres Friday on the streamer.

The Peabody Award-winning “Somebody Somewhere,” starring Bridget Everett, returns for its third and final season Sunday on HBO and Max. Everett plays Sam, a single woman who has found her people in a group of misfits in the Midwestern town of Manhattan, Kan.

Taylor Sheridan's CIA show “Special Ops: Lioness” returns for its second season Sunday on Paramount+. Zoe Saldana plays a CIA operative named Joe who recruits young females to infiltrate terrorist organizations. Nicole Kidman, Morgan Freeman, Michael Kelly, Dave Annable and Laysla De Oliveira are back for Season 2.

— Alicia Rancilio

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OPINION

Nobody's plan will end the Ukraine war

By HAL BRANDS

Bloomberg Opinion

The war in Ukraine is going badly for the good guys. Ukraine is slowly losing on the eastern front. Its forces are plagued by a dearth of manpower and ammunition. A summer incursion into Russia made headlines but didn't change the overall trajectory of the fighting. A deep-strike missile campaign into Russia is potentially promising but has been constrained by Western ambivalence. Ukraine's much-touted "Victory Plan" — which includes a push for NATO membership — hasn't gotten much U.S. support.

As the outlook in Ukraine darkens, there is growing pressure in Washington for a negotiated settlement. The challenge is that no one has figured out how to turn a deteriorating battlefield situation into a decent peace.

Former President Donald Trump's plan is the simplest: Get Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy together as soon as possible and threaten them both with dire consequences if the war doesn't end. Trump could tell Zelenskyy that he risks losing U.S. aid if he doesn't cut a deal; he might tell Putin that the U.S. will increase that aid, or hit Moscow with harsher sanctions, if Russia resists.

The strategy suits Trump's tough-guy image. A cutoff of U.S. assistance would quickly bring Ukraine to its knees. Unfortunately, it's less clear why the threat of more U.S. aid to Ukraine would frighten Putin, given that Trump has spent years complaining about how much the existing aid costs.

One suspects Trump's plan isn't about securing a favorable peace, but about securing peace at any cost. Trump seems to envision Ukraine signing away its occupied territories (perhaps swapping its foothold inside Russia

at Kursk for minor concessions), and probably agreeing to limits on its relations with the West, in exchange for a cease-fire that won't last a minute longer than Putin wants it to.

A second approach, with support in Democratic national-security circles, is more realistic in recognizing that Ukraine needs a better hand to play. The U.S. would continue helping the Ukrainians defend their territory, in hopes of eventually making the price of Russian offensives prohibitive. Washington might moderately tighten sanctions, going after some Chinese banks that are facilitating strategic trade with Russia. And if Vice President Kamala Harris wins the election, she might seek another aid package for Ukraine, meant to show Putin he can't outlast the West and to help Kyiv rebuild for at least the threat of another offensive. Then, maybe, Ukraine and the West could conduct diplomacy from a position of unity and strength.

Yet this approach, too, has an obvious weakness. If the support the U.S. has provided so far hasn't made Putin give up, why would a strategy featuring — essentially — more of the same now do the trick? True, Putin is paying an appalling cost per kilometer; he can't sustain heavy losses in manpower and equipment forever. But given that Russia has nearly four times Ukraine's population, Zelenskyy's army may bleed to death before Putin's does.

The issue here is the same contradiction that has plagued U.S. policy since February 2022. Washington wants Ukraine to win. But because of the pull of priorities in the Pacific and the fear of escalation with Russia, it also wants to limit U.S. involvement.

Alas, we can't always have everything we want. Today, many believe a peace deal would reduce the costs and risks America bears in supporting Ukraine. But simply get-

ting a deal that isn't tantamount to surrender may require incurring greater costs and risks than the U.S. has accepted so far.

Putin knows this. Talk of compromise, from the country that has insisted he must be defeated and even overthrown, surely makes him confident that things are going his way. Putin could respond to a peace initiative by holding out for maximalist objectives — annexation of several provinces, sharp curbs on Ukraine's sovereignty, maybe the overthrow of its government

Or, counterintuitively, he could play along, if he thinks de-escalation now could set him up for victory later. Offering a cease-fire along the current front line would put the burden of continuing the war on Ukraine. It would divide NATO, pitting countries that quietly favor an ugly deal against those who worry it would embolden Moscow further. A cease-fire could lead to sanctions relief, or at least sanctions slippage. And, if Trump wins and the America First ethos prevails in Washington, the West might lose interest in Ukraine once the shooting stops.

Indeed, a peace deal — be it good or bad for Ukraine — won't bring a lasting resolution. Putin hasn't given up on making Ukraine a Russian satrapy. So no settlement will last unless the West gives Ukraine the long-term security guarantees, and the military and financial assistance necessary to convince Putin that resuming the conflict is a bad idea.

If the U.S., under Trump or Harris, doesn't confront that problem squarely, the end of this Russia-Ukraine war could simply start the countdown to the next one.

Hal Brands is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and the Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Help troops and vets do a body scan for their minds

By REP. PAT RYAN

Special to Stars and Stripes

More than 17 veterans will take their lives today. My fellow soldiers are nearly nine times more likely to die by suicide than in combat. In fact, four times as many post-9/11 veterans have lost their lives to the invisible wounds of war than we lost on the battlefield.

It is more important than ever that we recognize these truths. We must acknowledge our failures. We have failed active duty service members, veterans and their families. As an Army combat veteran and member of Congress, I especially take this call to action seriously. We must act for ourselves, for our brothers and sisters in service, and for our nation.

When we attend West Point or go through boot camp, we are taught how to push through the pain and discomfort. We are trained to put the mission before our own needs. That mindset served me well when I was in the military. It kept me safe, allowed my unit to operate as an effective team, and enabled us to accomplish what we needed to.

But, at the end of the day when we would take off our uniform, it was hard to break out of that mindset. I have come to understand it is imperative we do so. Every time the mission is done, we need to check in with ourselves. When you come out of a fight or combat, you do a body scan. Where am I hurt? What is not right? We should do the same for

our minds. To be effective soldiers we must keep our minds sharp. To be good friends and loved ones we must be fully present.

Checking in with ourselves is not enough. We have to check in with our buddies, the men and women with whom we serve. Do not tell yourself there is someone else talking to them or taking care of them. We can never know for sure. Step up. Do not be afraid to ask the uncomfortable questions.

My fellow veterans, this applies to you too. Remember our time in the military was always focused on teams. Commands, formations, units; we were part of a larger group. The end of our military service is not a dispersal of that team. I have never heard a buddy of mine say he was frustrated or annoyed that someone he served with had reached out to check in on him. We need to be there to support each other through experiences we are uniquely equipped to understand.

When I ran for office, I saw it as an opportunity to step up these efforts on a national scale. I wanted to dedicate myself to finding solutions for service members, their families and veterans. When I arrived on Capitol Hill, I was fortunate enough to find a group of like-minded individuals in the For Country Caucus. As a bipartisan group of military veterans now serving in Congress, we are dedicated to finding compromise and fostering change. We use the skills we learned in the military to work together and get things done in an environment where that is not often the case. We have consistently priori-

tized the mental health of our men and women in uniform and the veterans' community by leading efforts to improve Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs mental health services.

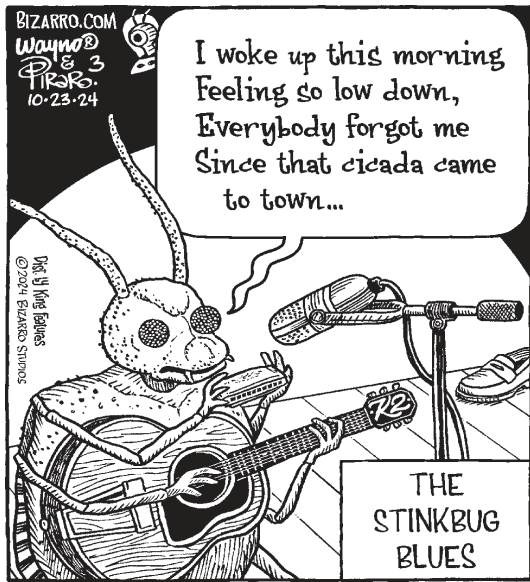
Here in Washington, we have met pushback. When discussing the allocation of military spending, we have heard from our colleagues that money should be put toward more concrete things. In part, I agree. We must prioritize investment in tangible tools and supplies. But how effective is a new tank when the people operating it are not mentally equipped to do so? We must ensure our service members are prepared to use the tools our nation gives them.

As many of my fellow soldiers have done before, I studied the words of notable military leaders. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., a pivotal figure in World War II, said, "If you are going to win any battle, you have to do one thing. You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do ... the body is never tired if the mind is not tired."

I implore you to live by these words. Uphold them in your community and your relationships. To put the mission first we must prioritize the mental health of our service members and veterans. Stay strong.

Rep. Pat Ryan, a Democrat, represents New York's 18th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he is a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the bipartisan For Country Caucus. He is a West Point graduate who served two combat tours in Iraq, earning two Bronze Stars.

Bizarro

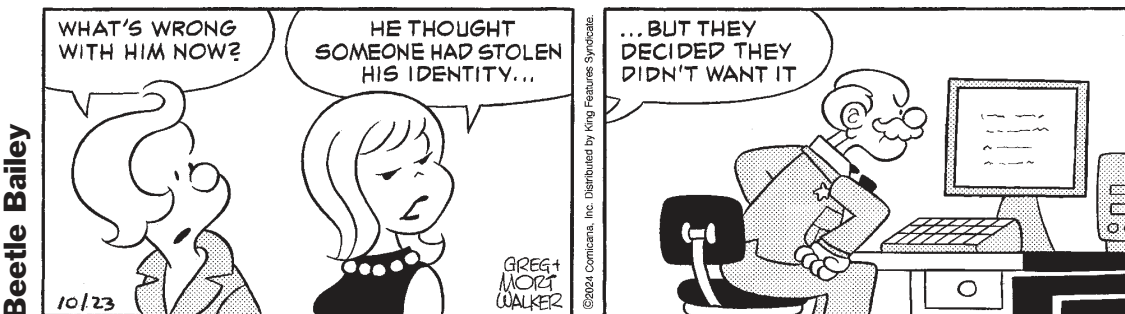
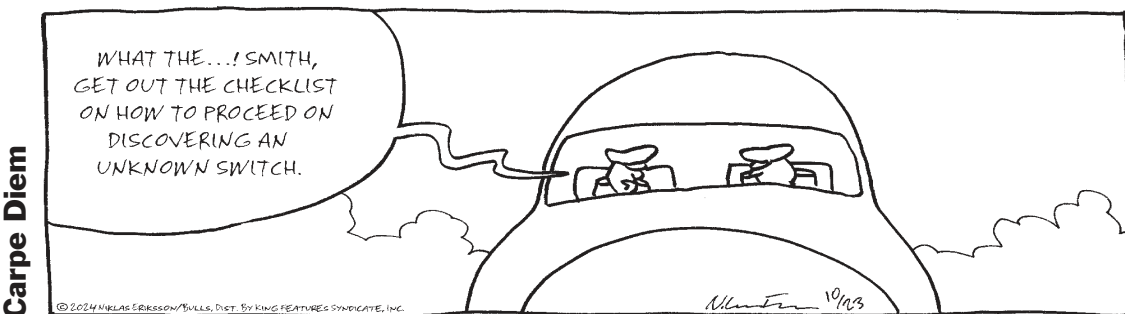
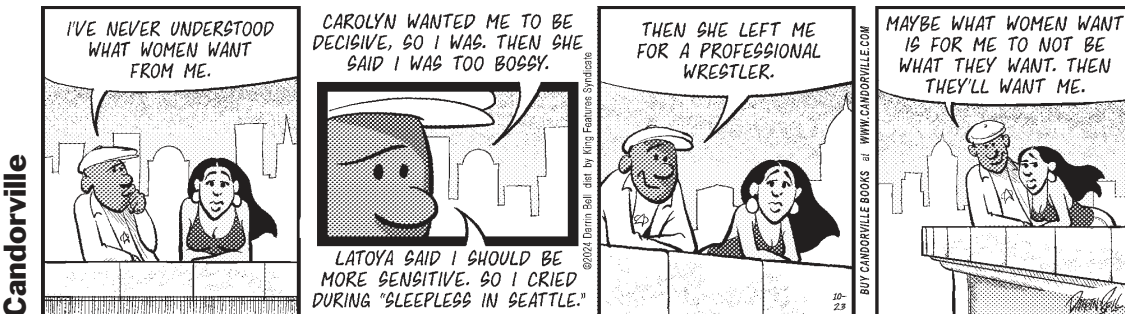
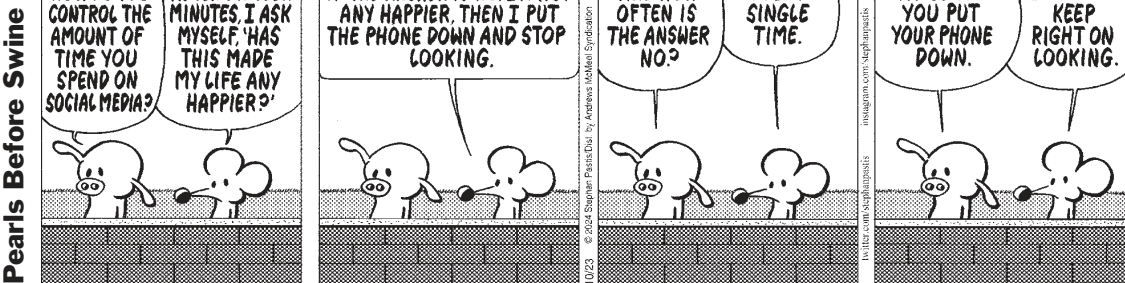


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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



ACROSS

- 1 Apple computers
- 5 Ewe's mate
- 8 Construction piece
- 12 Beige
- 13 Actor Mahershala
- 14 Stuffing herb
- 15 Declines
- 17 Scratched (out)
- 18 Under wraps
- 19 Swimsuit brand
- 21 Singer DiFranco
- 22 Vacillate
- 23 Motor homes
- 26 Carry- (travel bags)
- 28 Removes
- 31 Thai currency
- 33 Band's booking
- 35 Sci-fi vehicles
- 36 Short concession speech
- 38 Curator's focus
- 40 Stitch
- 41 Tip off
- 43 Ordinal suffix
- 45 Illinois city
- 47 Nearsightedness
- 51 LP player
- 52 Bear market events
- 54 Barks
- 55 "— Blue?"
- 56 Roman 602

- 57 Try out
- 58 Horror star Chaney
- 59 Bygone jets

- 24 Kilmer of "Top Gun"
- 25 Boastful bunch
- 27 "Diamonds" singer
- 29 Nemesis
- 30 Away from NNE
- 32 Autocratic, like old Russia
- 34 Imp
- 37 Prefix with athlete
- 39 Texter's sign-off
- 42 Twangy
- 44 Head warmers
- 45 Excellent, in slang
- 46 Ireland
- 48 Some GIs
- 49 "— ain't broke ..."
- 50 Unrepaired
- 53 Comic Philips

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	E	N	S		D	O	T		T	E	N	T	
A	L	A	I		O	N	S		A	V	O	W	
T	A	P	D	A	N	C	E		K	E	P	I	
A	L	S		R	U	E			T	E	N	E	T
				T	O	T			B	I	N		
L	E	T	O	N		A	L	A	D	D	I	N	
B	E	A	U		L	I	T		O	R	S	O	
S	N	O	R	K	E	L			D	W	E	L	T
					D	O	G		T	A	N		
S	I	N	A	I		B	I	Z		D	A	M	
L	O	O	T			T	Y	N	E	D	A	L	Y
O	T	O	E			V	E	E		I	M	A	M
P	A	N	S			A	S	S		D	E	N	Y

10-23

CRYPTOQUIP

ZSDHEEJ CHZZL NHC IGT
 QEHNCSNJY KHPSN HRY ZJNHKJ
 H RTCJY ISDHEY SR CEHSRSP:
 GHSEL QHICJE.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU DRINK FROM TWO CANTEENS AT ONCE, HOLDING ONE IN EACH HAND, ARE YOU MULTI-FLASKING?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals B

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Schedule

Wednesday's games

SOUTH
Liberty (5-0) at Kennesaw St. (0-6)
Middle Tennessee (2-5) at Jacksonville St. (3-3)

Thursday's games

EAST
Syracuse (5-1) at Pittsburgh (6-0)
SOUTH
Georgia Southern (5-2) at Old Dominion (3-4)

Friday's games

EAST
Yale (3-2) at Penn (2-3)
Louisville (4-3) at Boston College (4-3)
FAR WEST

Boise St. (5-1) at UNLV (6-1)
Rutgers (4-3) at Southern Cal (3-4)
Saturday's games

EAST
Mercyhurst (2-5) at Sacred Heart (3-5)
Fordham (0-7) at Lehigh (3-3)
Navy (6-0) vs. Notre Dame (6-1) at East Rutherford, N.J.
Cornell (2-3) at Brown (2-3)
Valparaiso (2-5) at Marist (0-7)
CCSU (3-4) at LIU Brooklyn (1-7)
Richmond (5-2) at Bryant (2-5)
Towson (3-4) at Monmouth (NJ) (4-3)
Duquesne (4-2) at Stonehill (1-5)
Maine (4-3) at Rhode Island (6-1)
Colgate (2-5) at Merrimack (3-4)
Holy Cross (3-5) at Lafayette (4-3)
Dartmouth (5-0) at Columbia (4-1)
Bucknell (3-4) at Georgetown (4-3)
St. Francis (Pa.) (2-5) at Robert Morris (4-3)
Princeton (2-3) at Harvard (4-1)
Albany (NY) (3-4) at Delaware (6-1)
William & Mary (5-2) at Stony Brook (5-2)
New Hampshire (4-3) at Villanova (5-2)
Rice (2-5) at Uconn (4-3)
Wagner (4-4) at Umass (1-6)
SOUTH

Georgia Tech (5-3) at Virginia Tech (4-3)
North Carolina (3-4) at Virginia (4-3)
Oklahoma (4-3) at Mississippi (5-2)
Charlotte (3-4) at Memphis (6-1)
Arkansas (4-3) at Mississippi St. (1-6)
Georgia St. (2-4) at Appalachian St. (2-4)
Butler (5-2) at Davidson (4-3)
Presbyterian (2-6) at Stetson (2-4)
Elon (2-5) at Hampton (4-3)
S. Utah (3-4) at West Georgia (2-5)
N. Dakota St. (7-1) at Murray St. (1-6)
ETSU (4-3) at Wofford (3-4)
Samford (3-3) at The Citadel (3-5)
Temple (2-5) at East Carolina (3-4)
Howard (3-4) at Norfolk St. (2-6)
Charleston Southern (1-6) at Tennessee Tech (2-5)
Jackson St. (5-2) at Bethune-Cookman (1-6)
Utah Tech (0-8) at E. Kentucky (3-4)
Lamar (4-3) at Northwestern St. (0-8)
E. Illinois (1-6) at UT Martin (4-3)
Morgan St. (3-4) at NC Central (5-2)
Delaware St. (1-6) at SC State (4-2)
Southern Miss. (1-6) at James Madison (5-2)
W. Carolina (4-3) at Mercer (6-1)
Missouri (6-1) at Alabama (5-2)

BYU (7-0) at UCF (3-4)
Alabama A&M (3-3) vs. Alabama St. (3-3) at Birmingham, Ala.
VMI (0-7) at Chattanooga (4-3)
McNeese St. (4-4) at Nicholls (3-4)
NC A&T (1-6) at Campbell (2-5)
Tarleton St. (6-1) at Austin Peay (3-4)
Texas (6-1) at Vanderbilt (5-2), 4:15 p.m.
Louisiana-Monroe (5-1) at South Alabama (3-4)
Incarnate Word (5-2) at SE Louisiana (4-4)
Southern U. (4-3) at Florida A&M (3-3)
Florida St. (1-6) at Miami (7-0)
Auburn (2-5) at Kentucky (3-4)
SMU (6-1) at Duke (6-1)

MIDWEST

Buffalo (4-3) at Ohio (4-3)
Nebraska (5-2) at Ohio St. (5-1)
Morehead St. (4-3) at Dayton (5-1)
Washington (4-3) at Indiana (7-0)
San Diego (4-2) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (4-3)
S. Illinois (2-5) at Indiana St. (2-5)
Cent. Michigan (3-4) at Miami (Ohio) (3-4)
Gardner-Webb (2-5) at SE Missouri (7-1)
W. Illinois (3-4) at Lindenwood (Mo.) (3-5)
Kent St. (0-7) at W. Michigan (4-3)
Bowling Green (3-4) at Toledo (5-2)
Maryland (4-3) at Minnesota (4-3)
E. Michigan (5-2) at Akron (1-6)
N. Illinois (4-3) at Ball St. (2-5)
Northwestern (3-4) at Iowa (4-3)
Missouri St. (5-2) at N. Iowa (2-5)
North Dakota (5-2) at Youngstown St. (2-6)
Penn St. (6-0) at Wisconsin (5-2)
Michigan St. (4-3) at Michigan (4-3)
South Dakota (6-1) at S. Dakota St. (5-2)
Kansas (2-5) at Kansas St. (6-1)

SOUTHWEST

Tulane (5-2) at North Texas (5-2)
Texas A&M Commerce (1-6) at Prairie View (2-5)
MVSU (0-7) at Ark.-Pine Bluff (2-5)
Texas Tech (5-2) at TCU (4-3)
UTSA (3-4) at Tulsa (2-5)
Oklahoma St. (3-4) at Baylor (3-4)
North Alabama (3-5) at Cent. Arkansas (5-2)
Troy (1-6) at Arkansas St. (4-3)
Grambling St. (4-3) at Texas Southern (2-4)
Utah (4-3) at Houston (2-5)
Houston Christian (3-4) at Stephen F. Austin (4-3)
LSU (6-1) at Texas A&M (6-1)

FAR WEST

Montana (5-2) at N. Colorado (1-6)
Illinois (6-1) at Oregon (7-0)
Wake Forest (3-4) at Stanford (2-5)
Oregon St. (4-3) at California (3-4)
New Mexico (3-4) at Colorado St. (4-3)
Sacramento St. (3-4) at Idaho St. (3-5)
West Virginia (3-4) at Arizona (3-4)
Utah St. (1-6) at Wyoming (1-6)
San Jose St. (5-2) at Fresno St. (4-3)
E. Washington (2-5) at Idaho (5-3)
Cincinnati (5-2) at Colorado (5-2)
Washington St. (6-1) at San Diego St. (3-3)
Nevada (3-5) at Hawaii (2-5)

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball National League
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Named Al LeBoeuf lead hitting coach, Eric Theisen as hitting coach.

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association
ATLANTA HAWKS — Re-signed F Jalen Johnson to a rookie scale extension.
CHARLOTTE HORNETS — Claimed G Jared Rhoden off waivers.
DETROIT PISTONS — Signed F Cole Swider to a two-way contract.
GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS — Re-signed G Moses Moody to a rookie scale extension.
HOUSTON ROCKETS — Re-signed G Jalen Green to a rookie scale extension. Re-signed C Alperen Sengun to a five-year rookie scale extension.
MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES — Waived F MacIom Hill.
NEW ORLEANS PELICANS — Claimed G Brandon Boston Jr. off waivers. Re-signed F Trey Murphy III to a rookie scale extension.
ORLANDO MAGIC — Re-signed G Jalen Suggs to a rookie scale extension.
WASHINGTON WIZARDS — Re-signed F Corey Kispert to a rookie scale extension. Waived G Ray J Dennis.

FOOTBALL

National Football League
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Elevated LB Markus Bailey and DL Ben Stille from the practice squad to the active roster.
ATLANTA FALCONS — Signed LB Rashan Evans and OL Tyrone Wheatley Jr. to the practice squad. Released OL Coy Cronk and LB Monty Rice from the practice squad. Released LB Milo Eifler from injured reserve.
BALTIMORE RAVENS — Elevated LB Kristian Welch from the practice squad. Signed RB Chris Collier.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Reinstated DL Jonathan Ford from injured reserve. Released LS Matt Orzech.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Re-signed K Spencer Shrader to the practice squad. Released RB Trent Pennix from the practice squad.
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed DT Zach Carter. Waived DT Nesta Jade Silvera.
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Placed CB Deane Leonard on injured reserve. Elevated

ed CBs Dicaprio Bootle and Shaun Wade from the practice squad to the active roster.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Elevated C Sam Mustipher and WR Jalen Reagor from the practice squad to the active roster. Waived LB Eli Neal.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Designated QB Tua Tagovailoa to return to practice. Placed WR Braxton Berrios on injured reserve. Activated CB Cam Smith.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Released TE N'Keal Harry from the practice squad. Signed WR Trishon Jackson and LB Calvin Munson to the practice squad.

NEW YORK JETS — Reinstated LB Haason Reddick from the did not report list.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Placed WR John Ross on the practice squad. Signed DB Tariq Castro-Fields.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Placed CB Jamel Dean and WR Kameron Johnson on injured reserve. Reinstated DL Earnest Brown injured reserve. Elevated P Trenton Gill from the practice squad to the active roster.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League
CAROLINA HURRICANES — Recalled RW Jackson Blake from Chicago (AHL).
COLORADO AVALANCHE — Sent F Chris Wagner to Colorado (AHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Reassigned G Jet Greaves to Cleveland (AHL).
EDMONTON OILERS — Agreed to terms with C Sam O'Reilly on a three-year, entry-level contract.

NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Recalled F Zachary L'Heureux from Milwaukee (AHL).
NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Assigned D Seamus Casey to Utica (AHL). Recalled D Danil Misyl from Utica. Reinstated F Adam Beckman from injured non-roster list and loaned him to Utica.

OTTAWA SENATORS — Waived C Matthew Highmore.

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Sent D Emil Andrae to Lehigh Valley (AHL). Reinstated D Nick Seeler from injured reserve.

ST. LOUIS BLUES — Reinstated RW Simon Robertson from the injured non-roster list and loaned to Springfield (AHL).
SEATTLE KRACEN — Recalled D Cale Fleury from Coachella Valley (AHL). Placed D Vince Dunn on long-term injured reserve.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer
AUSTIN FC — Re-signed F Jader Obrian to a two-year contract extension.

PRO SOCCER

MLS playoffs

Wild Card Eastern Conference

Tuesday: Montreal vs. Atlanta
Western Conference

Wednesday: Vancouver vs. Portland
First Round Best-of-three x-if necessary

Eastern Conference Cincinnati vs. New York City
Monday, Oct. 28: at Cincinnati
Saturday, Nov. 2: at New York City
x-Sunday, Nov. 9: at Cincinnati

Orlando vs. Charlotte FC
Friday: at Orlando
Friday, Nov. 1: at Charlotte FC
x-Saturday, Nov. 9: at Orlando

Columbus vs. New York
Tuesday, Oct. 29: at Columbus
Sunday, Nov. 3: at New York
x-Sunday, Nov. 10: at Columbus

Miami vs. Montreal/Atlanta winner
Friday, Oct. 25: at Miami
Saturday, Nov. 2: at Montreal/Atlanta winner

x-Saturday, Nov. 9: at Miami
Western Conference Seattle vs. Houston

Monday, Oct. 28: at Seattle
Sunday, Nov. 3: at Houston
x-Sunday, Nov. 10: at Seattle

Los Angeles FC vs. Vancouver/Portland winner
Friday, Oct. 25: at Los Angeles FC
Sunday, Nov. 3: at Vancouver/Portland winner

x-Friday, Nov. 8: at Los Angeles FC
Real Salt Lake vs. Minnesota

Tuesday, Oct. 29: at Real Salt Lake
Saturday, Nov. 2: at Minnesota
x-Friday, Nov. 8: at Real Salt Lake

LA Galaxy vs. Colorado
Friday, Oct. 25: at LA Galaxy
Friday, Nov. 1: at Colorado
x-Saturday, Nov. 9: at LA Galaxy

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Orlando	17	2	6	57	43	18
Washington	17	6	2	53	50	28
Gotham FC	16	4	5	53	37	19
Kansas City	15	3	7	52	54	30
North Carolina	12	10	3	39	34	27
Chicago	10	13	2	32	30	35
Portland	9	12	4	31	34	35
Bay FC	10	14	1	31	28	39
Louisville	7	11	7	28	32	36
Utah Royals FC	7	14	4	25	21	36
Angel City	7	12	6	24	29	39
Seattle	6	14	5	23	25	41
San Diego	5	13	7	22	21	34
Houston	5	15	5	20	18	39

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

Friday, Oct. 18

Seattle 2, Houston 1

Saturday, Oct. 19

Kansas City 4, San Diego 1
Louisville 1, Portland 0
Bay FC 1, North Carolina 0

Sunday, Oct. 20

Gotham FC 3, Orlando 1
Washington 2, Chicago 0
Utah Royals FC 1, Angel City 1, tie

Friday, Nov. 1

Gotham FC at Utah Royals FC
Angel City at Portland

Saturday, Nov. 2

Seattle at Orlando
Washington at North Carolina
Bay FC at Houston

TENNIS

Swiss Indoors

Monday

At St. Jakobshalle Basel, Switzerland
Purse: Euro 2,385,100
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Men's Singles Round of 32

Ugo Humbert (5), France, def. Jerome Kym, Switzerland, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 7-5.
David Goffin, Belgium, def. Matteo Arnaldi, Italy, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-2.

Arthur Fils (7), France, def. Daniel Altmaier, Germany, 7-6 (5), 6-3.
Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, France, def. James Duckworth, Australia, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Andrey Rublev (1), Russia, def. Nuno Borges, Portugal, 6-3, 6-2.

Erste Bank Open

Monday

At Wiener Stadthalle Vienna
Purse: Euro 2,470,310
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Men's Singles Round of 32

Flavio Cobolli, Italy, def. Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, Spain, 7-6 (1), 6-3.
Matteo Berrettini, Italy, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 7-5, 6-4.

Alexander Zverev (1), Germany, def. Joel Schwaerzler, Austria, 6-2, 6-2.



ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/AP

Second-team All-American Mark Sears considered leaving for the NBA before ultimately deciding to stay at Alabama.

Decision to return helps Sears, Davis

By JOHN MARSHALL

Associated Press

Alabama's Mark Sears and North Carolina's RJ Davis looked into the possibility of leaving for the NBA before deciding to return for another college season.

Their decisions helped their teams earn top-10 rankings in the AP Top 25 and earned both players some preseason honors, too.

Sears was a near-unanimous selection for The Associated Press preseason All-America men's basketball team released Monday, earning all but one vote from a 55-person national media panel. Davis was right behind him, nabbing 51 votes.

They were joined by Kansas big man Hunter Dickinson, Auburn forward Johni Broome, Arizona guard Caleb Love and Duke freshman Cooper Flagg. Love and Flagg tied for the final spot, creating a six-man team that includes only the ACC, Big 12 and SEC.

Alabama twin bill

Sears was a key cog in the Crimson Tide's first trip to the Final Four a year ago, orchestrating one of college basketball's highest-scoring teams.

The 6-foot-1 guard was named a second-team AP All-America after averaging 21.5 points, 4.2 rebounds and 4.0 assists. He was the first Division I player in 31 years to have 795 points, 150 rebounds, 145 assists and 95 three-pointers in a single season while breaking the Alabama single-season record with 26 games with at least 20 points.

Sears worked out for NBA scouts during the offseason before deciding to return to Alabama, earning the Crimson Tide a No. 2 ranking in the preseason AP Top 25.

Across the state at rival Auburn, Broome made a quick decision

AP Preseason All-America Team

The Associated Press' 2024-25 preseason All-America men's basketball team, with school, height, year and votes from a 55-member national media panel (key 2023-24 statistics in parentheses):

Mark Sears, Alabama, 6-1, 190 pounds, senior, 54 of 55 votes (17.3 ppg, 3.9 rpg, 3.3 apg, 50.8 fg pct, 85.7 FT pct)

RJ Davis, North Carolina, 6-0, 180, senior, 51 (21.1 ppg, 3.6 rpg, 3.5 apg, 47 steals, 86.7 FT pct)

Hunter Dickinson, Kansas, 7-2, 265, senior, 42 (17.9 ppg, 10.9 rpg, 2.3 apg, 54.8 fg pct, 47 blocks)

Johni Broome, Auburn, 6-10, 240, junior, 34 (16.5 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 54.8 fg pct, 78 blocks)

Caleb Love, Arizona, 6-4, 205, senior, 24 (18 ppg, 4.9 rpg, 3.5 apg, 93 3-pointers, 44 steals)

Cooper Flagg, Duke, 6-9, 205, freshman, 24 (16.5 ppg, 7.5 rpg, 3.8 spg, 2.7 bpg at Monteverde Academy in Florida)

Others receiving votes: Ryan Kalkbrenner, Creighton (15 votes); Alex Karaban, UConn (10); LJ Cryer, Houston (5); Braden Smith, Purdue (5); Kam Jones, Marquette (2); Tamin Lipsey, Iowa State (2); Wade Taylor IV, Texas A&M; Johnell Davis, Arkansas; Norchard Omier, Baylor; Ace Bailey, Rutgers; Robbie Avila, Saint Louis; Tucker DeVries, West Virginia; Tre Johnson, Texas

Associated Press

about his future, announcing in April that he would be back for a fifth season.

The 6-10 forward was a third-team AP All-American last season after averaging 16.5 points and 8.5 rebounds while shooting nearly 55% from the floor. With an eye on an NBA future, Broome worked hard on his perimeter shooting during the offseason and his return earned Auburn a No. 11 preseason ranking.

Along Tobacco Road

Like Sears, Davis has similar aspirations after opting to return for his fifth season at North Carolina.

The 6-foot guard was an AP All-American last season and the ACC player of the year after averaging 21.1 points, 3.6 rebounds and 3.5 assists on a team that reached the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

Up the road at Duke, Flagg was the No. 1-rated high school recruit out of Newport, Maine and has been projected as the No. 1 overall pick in the NBA Draft.

NBA

3 of league's elite battle in Northwest

BY PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DENVER — Jamal Murray feigned ignorance about a Northwest Division that features some of the top teams and talents in the league.

“The Northwest?” the Denver Nuggets guard playfully replied. “What’s in the Northwest?”

Only the top three seeds in the West last season in Oklahoma City, his Nuggets and Minnesota. Only All-Stars Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Anthony Edwards and reigning MVP Nikola Jokic.

“Sounds like a good division to me,” Murray quipped.

The Thunder, Nuggets and Timberwolves were all separated by just a game last season. It could be more of the same in this top-heavy division — Utah and Portland are in rebuilding mode — that did feature some significant shakeup (see: Minnesota).

Led by Gilgeous-Alexander, the Thunder are a team built for the grind of the regular season — and beyond. They’re a favorite to come out of the West, according to BetMGM. Oklahoma City bolstered its roster by adding guard Alex Caruso, one of the league’s top on-ball defenders, and big man Isaiah Hartenstein.

Minnesota orchestrated a seismic trade to pick up Julius Randle and Donte DiVincenzo from the New York Knicks for All-Star



HEATHER KHALIFA/AP

Guard Anthony Edwards led the Minnesota Timberwolves to the Western Conference finals last season and has the potential to be a perennial All-NBA pick for the next decade.

power forward/center Karl-Anthony Towns. No one may be more relieved to see Towns leave town than Jokic and the Nuggets. Towns gave them all sorts of difficulties last season in a seven-game second-round playoff series with his ability to draw Jokic out to the perimeter.

Don’t discount the Nuggets, who won their first NBA title in 2022-23. They boast a dynamic duo in Jokic and Murray. Fresh off a new contract, Murray is looking for a fast start that could net his first All-Star appearance. The Nuggets saw Kentavious Caldwell-Pope leave but gained veteran guard

Russell Westbrook.

A look at the Northwest Division, in predicted order of finish:

Oklahoma City Thunder: One of the youngest teams in the NBA last season, the Thunder quickly found their stride to earn the top seed in the West and won a first-round playoff series before losing to Dallas. Most of the core returns.

Mark Daigneault, last year’s coach of the year, has a nucleus powered by Gilgeous-Alexander — MVP runner-up last season — and Chet Holmgren, a 7-foot-1 post player who was second in top rookie voting. Jalen Williams made a giant leap last season and Lu Dort is one of the league’s top wing defenders.

This is a deep team poised to make a deep playoff run.

Minnesota Timberwolves: Though Edwards is just entering his prime years, the time is now for this group to take the next step after reaching the conference finals last season. After all, key cogs Mike Conley (37) and Rudy Gobert (32) aren’t getting any younger.

Minnesota is trying to adjust to life without Towns, the team’s No. 2 scorer last season. The Timberwolves replaced him with a three-time All-Star in Randle, who averaged 23 points per game over the last three seasons for the Knicks. Minnesota also picked up a valuable shooter off the bench in DiVincenzo.

Edwards has the potential to be a perennial All-NBA pick for the next decade, if not a league MVP.

Denver Nuggets: Go ahead and pencil Jokic in for somewhere in the vicinity of 26.4 points, 12.4 rebounds and nine

assists a night. That should put the Serbian big man once again in the thick of the MVP chase. He’s got a strong supporting cast with Murray, Aaron Gordon and Michael Porter Jr. Off the bench — or maybe even in the starting lineup — there’s Westbrook, the only active player who has more triple-doubles than Jokic (199 for Westbrook, 130 for Jokic). The path to another title rests on the playmaking of Murray.

Utah Jazz: After striking out at luring big-name free agents to Salt Lake City during the offseason, the Jazz have pivoted to developing rookies and second-year players already on the roster. Lauri Markkanen cemented himself as the newest franchise cornerstone after signing a contract extension in August. Still, there’s little change in his supporting cast that’s turned in back-to-back losing seasons under coach Will Hardy. On draft night, they took Cody Williams (10th overall), Isaiah Collier (29th) and Kyle Filipowski (32nd). Guard Keyonte George is coming off a solid rookie season where he averaged 13 points and 4.4 assists.

Portland Trail Blazers: Their coach is now a Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Famer. Chauncey Billups — aka “Mr. Big Shot” — enters his fourth season with the Blazers and looking for his first postseason appearance in charge of the team. They’re led by guard Anfernee Simons, who’s coming off a season where he averaged 22.6 points. Guard Scoot Henderson was the third overall pick in 2023 and showed flashes of his talent.

Veterans’ health key in Pacific

BY JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — LeBron James and son Bronny playing side by side for the Lakers.

Stephen Curry and Draymond Green competing without Klay Thompson, a trio who captured four NBA titles together with Golden State before Thompson’s recent departure for Dallas.

A Clippers roster now missing Paul George and Russell Westbrook as Kawhi Leonard’s leading men.

JJ Redick is the new Lakers coach while Mike Budenholzer will be guiding Kevin Durant and the talented Suns.

Yes, there are a bunch of big changes in the new-look Pacific Division, one of the NBA’s most closely contested for playoff spots in the powerful Western Conference.

Curry has something to prove. He and the Warriors look to get back to postseason form after missing as the No. 10 seed in 2024 only two years after winning the title. And they will be missing Thompson, who joined the Dallas Mavericks. Buddy Hield is a new face expected to take on a big scoring load to help fill the void.

“You ask all 30 teams last season if you have championship aspirations, you probably take eight of them serious, 12 of them maybe, and only one of them gets to say, ‘Yeah, we had championship aspirations,’” Curry said. “I think we’re in that position where we can be a relevant team early and give ourselves a chance to compete and then assess where we are because that’s what every team has to go through.”

“We just have the shadow of the expectations that we’re supposed to be in that conversation.”

A look at each team in the Pacific Division in predicted order of finish:

Golden State Warriors: Coach Steve Kerr and two-time MVP Curry are counting on the Warriors bouncing back from missing the playoffs last season.

Andrew Wiggins is eager to return to the form he showed during the championship run in 2022 after an up-and-down season, and Draymond Green looks to stay healthy and help improve a defense that struggled to stop high-octane offenses.

They will help complement an athletic young group featuring Jonathan Kuminga, Trayce Jackson-Davis and Brandin Podziemski.

“Our transition defense fell off the

map last year,” Kerr said.

Phoenix Suns: The Suns are in Year 2 of their Big 3 era, hoping that an overhauled supporting cast can help All-Stars Durant, Devin Booker and Bradley Beal after a disappointing first-round playoff exit last season.

Phoenix added Budenholzer, who won the 2021 title with the Milwaukee Bucks, and beefed up their backcourt by signing point guards Tyus Jones and Monte Morris. The Suns didn’t have a true point guard last year.

The 36-year-old Durant continues his stellar career and the Suns need him to be as durable as he was last season, when he played in 75 games. He and Booker didn’t get much of a break this summer because both were key contributors at the Olympics.

Beal returns after missing a big chunk of last season with various injuries.

Sacramento Kings: As Mike Brown begins his third season coaching the Kings, the franchise is counting on taking another big step in becoming a regular contender in the West.

Sacramento acquired DeMar DeRozan and re-signed key sixth man Malik Monk. DeRozan will be the primary scoring option on a team that already has three-time All-Star big man Domantas Sabonis, point guard De’Aaron Fox and Keegan Murray.

Los Angeles Lakers: LeBron James



MARCO GARCIA/AP

Stephen Curry is hoping to lead the Golden State Warriors on a deep run after winning the title in 2022 but missing the playoffs last year.

will become the first NBA player to play alongside his son when the top scorer in NBA history suits up with Bronny in his record-tying 22nd season. Once that milestone is out of the way, the Lakers will attempt to turn two years of relative continuity into the success that eluded them last year.

General manager Rob Pelinka made almost no moves in the offseason, likely returning with 13 players from the team that finished eighth in the West and lost to Denver in the first round despite remarkably good health for LeBron and off-injured Anthony Davis.

The Lakers’ biggest change is on the bench, where Redick is replacing Dar-

vin Ham. Redick has never coached at any level, but the former sharpshooting guard won over Pelinka with his cutting-edge knowledge of the sport.

Los Angeles Clippers: Leonard will be without running mate George, who signed a lucrative deal with the Philadelphia 76ers. Westbrook is gone, too, having joined the Nuggets. Leonard will team with holdover James Harden, whose scoring and assists dipped last season when he willingly gave up the ball to Leonard and George.

Leonard’s ability to stay healthy will be key. It’s an issue that limited him to 68 games last season and has made him unavailable at times in the playoffs.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	0	0	.000	—
New York	0	0	.000	—
Toronto	0	0	.000	—
Boston	0	0	.000	—
Philadelphia	0	0	.000	—
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	0	0	.000	—
Washington	0	0	.000	—
Atlanta	0	0	.000	—
Charlotte	0	0	.000	—
Miami	0	0	.000	—
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	0	0	.000	—
Milwaukee	0	0	.000	—
Chicago	0	0	.000	—
Detroit	0	0	.000	—
Cleveland	0	0	.000	—
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	0	0	.000	—
Dallas	0	0	.000	—
Memphis	0	0	.000	—
Houston	0	0	.000	—
New Orleans	0	0	.000	—
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	0	0	.000	—
Utah	0	0	.000	—
Minnesota	0	0	.000	—
Oklahoma City	0	0	.000	—
Denver	0	0	.000	—
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	0	0	.000	—
Golden State	0	0	.000	—
Sacramento	0	0	.000	—
Phoenix	0	0	.000	—
L.A. Lakers	0	0	.000	—

Tuesday's games

New York at Boston
Minnesota at L.A. Lakers

Wednesday's games

Indiana at Detroit
Brooklyn at Atlanta
Cleveland at Toronto
Milwaukee at Philadelphia
Orlando at Miami
Charlotte at Houston
Chicago at New Orleans
Memphis at Utah
Golden State at Portland
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers

Thursday's games

Boston at Washington
San Antonio at Dallas
Minnesota at Sacramento
Oklahoma City at Denver

Southwest goes through Dallas

By SCHUYLER DIXON

Associated Press

DALLAS — Klay Thompson has joined Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving in Dallas after the Mavericks made their first run to the NBA Finals since winning the championship 13 years ago.

It's Year 2 for Victor Wembanyama in San Antonio after the French wunderkind helped lead his country to the gold medal game at the Paris Games. A late U.S. rally gave the Americans the Olympic title.

Ja Morant should be there from the start for the Memphis Grizzlies, who have had dealt with turmoil and injuries with their star guard since before the second of consecutive Southwest Division titles in 2023.

Zion Williamson has a mostly healthy season under his belt with the New Orleans Pelicans, and the Houston Rockets are trying to build on coach Ime Udoka's promising debut in the wake of three consecutive last-place seasons.

The Southwest conversation starts with the Mavs, who edged the Pelicans for the division title last year before rolling to the Western Conference championship as the fifth seed.

"The expectation is to win a championship," said coach Jason Kidd, who has led Dallas to at least the West finals in two of his three seasons. "Hopefully, we're lucky enough to be put in that situation. The league is as good as it's ever been."

A look at the Southwest in the predicted order of finish:

Dallas Mavericks: The Mavs moved quickly to improve after the five-game loss to Boston in the NBA Finals. That wasn't the case two years earlier after also losing in five games in the West finals to Golden State.

Thompson was on the other side of that 2022 series on the way to his fourth championship with Splash Brother Stephen Curry and star forward Draymond Green. There figures to be an adjustment period for Thompson after spending his first 13 seasons with the Warriors. He's also coming off a sub-par season by his standards.

The presence of Thompson will help lift some of the scoring load from Doncic and Irving. The center tandem of Dereck Lively II and Daniel Gafford should provide offensive punch and rim protection.

Memphis Grizzlies: Morant's shoulder injury, which sidelined him not long after he opened the season with a 25-game suspension over off-court issues, wasn't the only injury problem last season, when a three-year



LM OTERO/AP

After spending his first 13 seasons in the NBA with the Golden State Warriors, Klay Thompson joins the Western Conference champion Dallas Mavericks this season.

playoff run ended. Second-leading scorer Desmond Bane missed half the season with a sprained left ankle as the Grizzlies went 27-55 and finished 13th in the West, a far cry from being the conference's No. 2 seed the previous two seasons.

The Grizzlies also have a key addition in big man Zach Edey out of Purdue, the AP's men's college basketball player of the year the last two seasons. At 7-foot-4 and a slimmed down 290 pounds, Memphis hopes the ninth pick overall in the June draft, serves a big role as a rebounder, screen-setter and shot blocker.

New Orleans Pelicans: While Williamson is hoping to be healthier and more dynamic than he's been in his first five NBA seasons, the future of high-scoring wing Brandon Ingram is unclear. Ingram is in the final year of his contract and has been the subject of trade speculation since the Pelicans declined to give him the type of extension he was seeking during the offseason.

The addition of Dejounte Murray gives the Pelicans a ball-dominant point guard and allows fellow guard CJ McCollum to go back to his more natural position of shooting guard.

Houston Rockets: After making a 19-game im-

provement in the first season under Udoka, the Rockets have adopted a playoffs-or-bust mantra this season. They have reason to believe that could happen with a team that is virtually unchanged from last season.

The additions of Dillon Brooks and Fred Van Vleet before last season added much-needed veteran experience and leadership to help Houston's young players develop. Now recent high draft picks Jalen Green, Jabari Smith Jr. and Amen Thompson must all take a step forward for the Rockets to reach the postseason for the first time since James Harden led the team in 2020.

San Antonio Spurs: Chris Paul's arrival has Spurs fans dreaming of a newly incorporated Lob City, with the veteran point guard feeding Wembanyama for one sensational dunk after another.

Wembanyama, Jeremy Sochan, Devin Vassell and Keldon Johnson led the youngest roster in the NBA last season to a 22-60 record. San Antonio believes it can snap a five-season postseason drought now with the additions of Paul, fellow veteran Harrison Barnes and No. 4 pick Stephon Castle out of Connecticut.

Dynasties: Big moves tougher to make with new CBA rules

FROM PAGE 24

the Bucks team that was ousted in Round 2 a year later. "But then to win back-to-back is even harder."

The NBA doesn't seem to mind. This is the Parity Era and the current collective bargaining agreement figures to make it even tougher for teams to be dynastic — a swift change from the four-year run spanning 2015 through 2018 when Cleveland and Golden State got to the finals annually.

In simple terms, the more that teams spend, the harder it is now to make moves, especially moves involving big-contract players. The latest CBA, which went into effect last year, includes two aprons over the luxury tax figure. Go over the first apron, your roster flexibility is hampered. Go over the second one, and it's severely hampered. It could be argued there haven't been rule changes this significant since the league changed the lottery odds and added a play-

in tournament to discourage tanking.

An example: it recently took Minnesota and New York several days to complete a deal a couple of weeks ago after agreeing on the parameters — Karl-Anthony Towns going to the Knicks, Julius Randle and Donte DiVencenzo going to the Wolves — because the financial particulars needed to be very precise.

"The new rules ... some of the consequences are unintended, quite frankly," Wolves President of Basketball Operations Tim Connelly was quoted by ESPN saying. "I don't know if anyone intended to make it this challenging to make moves, to make trades when you're above certain aprons."

No, that's exactly what the NBA wanted. "I don't want to say nothing is lost, but to me, I don't think our system, by definition, will prevent repeat championships," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "I think that, yes, it makes it less likely, but we didn't

set out to say, 'Let's make sure there's a different champion every year.' I think, again, it goes more to equality of opportunity. But I think in the same vein, I think there's real incentive for players to stay in markets."

Nobody would say all 30 teams enter this season with a realistic title chance. But there are more true hopefuls than there were just a few seasons ago. Last year, 12 teams entered the year with title odds of 25-1 or shorter. Six years earlier, at the peak of the Warriors-Cavs run, there were only three such teams.

"The league's looking for parity," Washington general manager Will Dawkins said. "And flattening the lottery odds, adding in the second apron, all of those things are things that are supposed to contribute to that."

None of the previous five champions, not including the reigning Celtics (the overwhelming favorites to win this season's title,

according to BetMGM Sportsbook), even made it back to the finals the following season. That matches the longest such drought in NBA history, last done when the champions from 1973 through 1977 — in order, New York, Boston, Golden State, Boston again and then Portland — were all ousted in the conference finals or earlier.

A few years ago, most teams probably didn't think they had a realistic chance. That's different row.

"I just think all of it is setting up to be more competitive, more teams going for it. And that's when it gets fun, when there's not much difference between teams," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "It'll be how teams can manage all those different emotions and the competitive spirit throughout the course of a season. It gets uncomfortable at times. I love it. It's awesome for the league, it's great for viewership, it's great for the fans. It's ultimately what you want."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Ducks' rise to top of poll another sign of the times

By ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

Never mind that a faction of fans lament college sports' transition from amateurism to above-board professionalism. This football season is delivering when it comes to unpredictability and entertainment value.

It's reflected week by week in The Associated Press college football poll.

Oregon on Sunday became the fourth team to hold the No. 1 spot. No team has held on to it longer than three consecutive weeks. And three of the top five teams have a loss entering Week 9 for the first time since 2007.

Player movement through the transfer portal and promises of NIL riches in recruiting have helped spread talent across the country. Expansion in the Big Ten and Southeastern Conference created three top-five matchups before November for the first time since 1996, according to Sportradar.

The season has seen Iowa State and Indiana match their best starts, both at 7-0. Army and Navy are a combined 13-0. Cam Ward's transfer to Miami has gotten the Hurricanes out to a 7-0 start and made him a strong Heisman Trophy candidate. BYU, 5-7 a year ago, also has opened with seven straight wins.

Meanwhile, Alabama was No. 1 when it got upset by traditional SEC doormat Vanderbilt and now has two losses before November for the first time since 2006 after

dropping its game at Tennessee on Saturday.

Defending national champion Michigan has lost two straight and went from the top 10 three weeks ago to out of the rankings this week at 4-3.

Florida State was No. 10 in the preseason and now sits 1-6. Oklahoma, which until two weeks ago had been ranked since the end of the 2022 season, has been outscored 69-12 in its last two games. Southern California, No. 11 three weeks ago, has lost three straight and four of five against its first Big Ten schedule.

"A good team in college, going forward, is going to be like 8-4 or 9-3. It's just what it is," Nebraska coach Matt Rhule said.

Checking in on five of the Top 25:

No. 1 Oregon: The Ducks very well could run the table against their remaining schedule, but there are potential traps. No. 20 Illinois visits this week and is riding momentum. And there are trips to Michigan and Wisconsin and a rivalry game at home against Washington. QB Dillon Gabriel gets the headlines, but RB Jordan James has elevated his game and is averaging just under 6 yards per carry and the defense is more than holding up its end.

No. 10 Iowa State: Something magical is happening in Ames, judging by the Cyclones' improbable late comeback to beat UCF 38-35. Rocco Becht didn't have a good passing night, throwing a pick-six and almost another. He

stepped it up as a runner and picked up 97 yards. Of his career-high 20 rushes, nine went for first downs and two others went for touchdowns. The Cyclones are off this week. If they beat Texas Tech at home on Nov. 2, they'll be 8-0 for the first time in program history.

No. 13 Indiana: The Hoosiers' 56-7 beatdown of Nebraska came at a cost. All signs point to QB Kurtis Rourke not being available for this week's home game against Washington because of an injury to his right (throwing) hand. For all the points and yards the Hoosiers have put up in Curt Cignetti's first season as coach, the defense shouldn't be overlooked. Indiana is allowing just 263 yards and 14 points per game.

No. 19 Pittsburgh: The Panthers, 6-0 for the first time since 1982, begin a challenging back end of the schedule with a Thursday home game against Syracuse. Pitt's defense has played at a high level and is averaging three sacks per game. RB Desmond Reid has been a dynamic offensive weapon. QB Eli Holstein looks to bounce back after a flat performance against California.

No. 25 Vanderbilt: The Commodores are in the ratings for the first time since the 2013 season's final poll and on their first three-game winning streak since 2017. New Mexico State transfer QB Diego Pavia has sparked an offense that, at 33 points per game, is on track to set a program record for scoring average. Vanderbilt hosts No. 5 Texas this week.



RODOLFO GONZALEZ/AP

Texas coach Steve Sarkisian, right, argues with officials during the second half of Saturday's game against Georgia in Austin, Texas.

SEC fines Texas; Sarkisian urges 'better discretion'

By JIM VERTUNO
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas coach Steve Sarkisian said Monday the No. 5 Longhorns have a "passionate fanbase" that needs to use "better discretion" after the school was fined and threatened with further sanctions by the Southeastern Conference over fans throwing water bottles and trash on the field during the loss to No. 1 Georgia.

Texas fans pelted the field in the third quarter Saturday night after an apparent pass interference penalty against the Longhorns, prompting the game to be briefly delayed for cleanup before the penalty was ultimately reversed.

Sarkisian during the game went on the field at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium to implore fans to stop throwing things.

"I know that we've got a passionate fanbase and I think that showed Saturday night. I think we all were a little upset in that moment. I just think that we've all got to use a little better discretion in moments like that," Sarkisian said.

"We don't want that to be the narrative that that's what DKR is all about," Sarkisian said. "It was too good of a football game for that to be the focal point of it all. I think in the end they got it (the penalty reversal) right."

School administrators and SEC officials condemned the acts on Sunday.

After finding the officials made the correct call, the SEC fined Texas \$250,000 and said the

school must meet requirements assigned by SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey.

Those requirements include using available resources to find and suspend fans who threw debris on the field or at Georgia's sideline, reviewing alcohol availability policies and providing a report of the school's findings to the SEC.

The SEC did not suspend Texas' alcohol sales, but said it can if the Longhorns don't meet their requirements.

"The throwing of debris and resulting interruption of play that took place Saturday night cannot be part of any SEC event," Sankey said in a release on Sunday. "The SEC is assigned responsibility by its membership to enforce its sportsmanship and game management policies and these actions are consistent with that oversight responsibility, including the financial penalty and mandated reviews."

Texas issued a joint statement from Board of Regents Chairman Kevin Eltife, President Jay Hartzell and athletic director Chris Del Conte that condemned the bottle-throwing and apologized to Georgia players and staff, the SEC and game officials.

"This type of behavior will not be tolerated," the statement said. "We are committed to fostering a positive environment for all participants, teams, officials and fans, and we will take steps to ensure that this type of behavior does not happen again."

Texas has not said what those steps will be.



AJ MAST/AP

Oregon running back Jay Harris scores a touchdown against Purdue on Friday. The Ducks became the fourth team this season to be ranked No. 1. No team has remained on top for more than three weeks.

NHL/WORLD SERIES

Nylander, Maple Leafs power past Lightning

Associated Press

TORONTO — William Nylander had two goals and an assist as the Toronto Maple Leafs defeated the Tampa Bay Lightning 5-2 on Monday night.

Auston Matthews, Max Pacioretty and Matthew Knies also scored for Toronto. Anthony Stolarz made 32 saves. Mitch Marner had two assists.

Nick Paul and Brayden Point repled for Tampa Bay. Andrei Vasilevskiy allowed four goals on 14 shots before getting the hook midway through the second period. Jonas Johansson made 14 saves in relief. Victor Hedman had two assists.

Nylander opened the scoring early in the first and put Toronto up 3-1 midway through the second.

Pacioretty stretched the lead to 4-1 from well out to end Vasilevskiy's night before Knies added another on Johansson for a four-goal advantage through 40 minutes.

The Leafs beat the Lightning in the first round of the 2023 playoffs for the Original Six franchise's only series victory in the NHL's salary cap era.

Lightning winger Nikita Kucherov, who picked up an assist, was held in check after entering with an NHL-leading seven goals in four games.

Toronto's 27th-ranked power play connected on its second opportunity when Matthews was quickest to a loose puck in the crease after Vasilevskiy couldn't squeeze Marner's initial shot.

The Lightning had a 5-on-3 power play down 4-1 in the second for a full two minutes when Max Domi and Bobby McMann were penalized on the same sequence, but Stolarz held the fort.

Toronto scored at least five goals in a game for the 22nd time dating back to last season. Only the Colorado Avalanche (31), Detroit Red Wings (25), Lightning (24) and Dallas Stars (23) have more five-goal contests over the same span.



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Maple Leafs right wing William Nylander (88) celebrates his goal with teammates Chris Tanev and Morgan Rielly during the first period against the Tampa Bay Lightning in Toronto on Monday.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	7	4	2	1	9	23	24
Toronto	6	4	2	0	8	20	13
Boston	6	3	2	1	7	21	20
Tampa Bay	5	3	2	0	6	18	15
Ottawa	5	3	2	0	6	18	19
Montreal	6	2	3	1	5	16	21
Buffalo	7	2	4	1	5	21	26
Detroit	5	2	3	0	4	14	17
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	8	5	2	1	11	27	20
N.Y. Rangers	5	4	0	1	9	24	10
Washington	4	3	1	0	6	16	14
N.Y. Islanders	5	2	1	2	6	14	14
Pittsburgh	7	3	4	0	6	24	31
Carolina	4	2	2	0	4	12	11
Columbus	5	2	3	0	4	18	18
Philadelphia	5	1	3	1	3	13	21
Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	5	5	0	0	10	24	8
Dallas	6	5	1	0	10	18	9
Utah	6	4	1	1	9	22	20
Minnesota	5	3	0	2	8	15	11
St. Louis	6	4	2	0	8	17	17
Chicago	6	2	3	1	5	15	18
Colorado	6	2	4	0	4	21	29
Nashville	5	0	5	0	0	10	23
Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	5	4	0	1	9	20	12
Los Angeles	6	3	1	2	8	21	19
Seattle	6	4	2	0	8	22	17
Vegas	6	3	2	1	7	23	20
Vancouver	5	2	1	2	6	14	15
Anaheim	5	2	2	1	5	12	15
Edmonton	6	2	4	0	4	12	24
San Jose	6	0	4	2	2	12	26

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

Sunday's games	
Winnipeg 6, Pittsburgh 3	Los Angeles 4, Anaheim 1
Colorado 4, San Jose 1	
Monday's game	
Toronto 5, Tampa Bay 2	
Tuesday's games	
Washington at Philadelphia	Minnesota at Florida
Tampa Bay at New Jersey	Dallas at Buffalo
N.Y. Rangers at Montreal	Toronto at Columbus
Detroit at N.Y. Islanders	Winnipeg at St. Louis
Vancouver at Chicago	Colorado at Seattle
Boston at Nashville	Carolina at Edmonton
Ottawa at Utah	Pittsburgh at Calgary
San Jose at Anaheim	Los Angeles at Vegas
Wednesday's game	
Philadelphia at Washington	
Thursday's games	
Dallas at Boston	Florida at N.Y. Rangers
Minnesota at Tampa Bay	New Jersey at Detroit
St. Louis at Toronto	Carolina at Calgary
Colorado at Utah	Winnipeg at Seattle
San Jose at Los Angeles	



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

After coming over from the St. Louis Cardinals at the trade deadline, Tommy Edman was named NLCS MVP for the Dodgers, hitting .407 with 11 RBIs to put Los Angeles in the World Series against the Yankees.

Dodgers get contributions from all over to stay alive

BY BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The World Series is always the goal for the big-spending Los Angeles Dodgers. It's been elusive recently, with first-round flops two years running. Now, with Shohei Ohtani leading the way for the first time, they are going for another championship.

So a raucous clubhouse celebration was in order after the Dodgers beat the New York Mets to clinch their record 25th National League pennant.

"We hope we can do it again," infielder Max Muncy said. "We need to get four more wins."

Next up are the New York Yankees in the World Series, starting with Game 1 on Friday at Dodger Stadium. The best-of-seven series pits two of baseball's most glamorous teams against each other.

"I know the fans love this and the players love this, too," Los Angeles outfielder Teoscar Hernández said. "It's not going to be easy but we have the team, we have the help, and we're going to go for that World Series trophy."

"I think the whole world was looking forward or hoping for this potential matchup," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

He isn't kidding. Los Angeles has another country backing it — Japan has been tuning into the team's playoff games in record numbers, eager to see Ohtani and pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto.

The Dodgers landed Ohtani with a record \$700 million, 10-year deal in free agency, and they gave Yamamoto a \$325 million, 12-year contract.

At the same time, Los Angeles

MLB scoreboard

WORLD SERIES (Best-of-seven) x-if necessary	
N.Y. Yankees vs. L.A. Dodgers	
Friday:	N.Y. Yankees (Cole 8-5) at L.A. Dodgers (TBD), AFN-Sports, 2 a.m., Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT
Saturday:	at L.A. Dodgers, AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT
Monday, Oct. 28:	at N.Y. Yankees, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT
Tuesday, Oct. 29:	at N.Y. Yankees, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT
x-Wednesday, Oct. 30:	at N.Y. Yankees, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT
x-Friday, Nov. 1:	at L.A. Dodgers, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT
x-Saturday, Nov. 2:	at L.A. Dodgers, AFN-Sports, a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

overcame a litany of injuries that decimated its starting pitching. It led the major leagues with 36 injured list placements and 2,342 days lost, 445 more days than any other team.

Helped by a couple of key contributors who arrived at the July trade deadline, the Dodgers still finished with baseball's best record at 98-64 to earn home-field advantage throughout the postseason.

"This is a team that stayed together. Everybody contributed," Hernández said. "Shohei was a big part of all the wins we got, but the pitching, the bullpen was the big thing and thanks to them we're here, going to the World Series."

Los Angeles was in a perilous position in its NL Division Series, trailing the rival San Diego Padres. The Dodgers rallied to win the last two games and take the best-of-five series 3-2.

"They proved to themselves how tough they are," Roberts said.

Los Angeles is down to three healthy starters and has used three bullpen games so far this postseason. That strategy worked twice, including Sunday's clincher over the Mets.

It wasn't supposed to be like this. The Dodgers acquired Tyler Glasnow, but he went down with an elbow injury in mid-August. Two weeks later, Clayton Kershaw, already coming off elbow surgery, was finished because of a bone spur in his big toe. Dustin May never pitched this season and Tony Gonsolin was rehabbing after Tommy John surgery.

Walker Buehler struggled at times in his first season back from a second Tommy John procedure.

All-Star first baseman Freddie Freeman and shortstop Miguel Rojas have missed some time this postseason because of injuries, forcing multiple lineup changes.

Still, Los Angeles has stayed alive. "I'm going to enjoy it no matter how little I helped," said Kershaw, the team's longest-tenured current player.

The Dodgers bolstered their roster in July by trading for starter Jack Flaherty, reliever Michael Kopech and versatile utilityman Tommy Edman, whose 11 RBIs against the Mets earned him NLCS MVP honors. Thrown into the cleanup spot in Game 6, Edman responded with four RBIs.

"I just think that I've got to bet on players that I feel are capable, put them in the best position to have success and be willing to live with whatever consequence," Roberts said. "This postseason, I've had a lot of clarity, and the players have made me look really good."

NFL

BRIEFS

Tests confirm 49ers' Aiyuk tore ACL, will miss rest of season

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — San Francisco 49ers star receiver Brandon Aiyuk will miss the rest of the season after tearing ligaments in his right knee.

Coach Kyle Shanahan said tests Monday confirmed the initial diagnosis that Aiyuk tore his ACL and would need major reconstructive surgery after getting hit on the knee while making a catch in the red zone late in the second quarter of a 28-18 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday. Shanahan said Aiyuk also tore his MCL.

Shanahan said Aiyuk took the news of a significant injury hard when he talked to him at home on Sunday night.

"He was hurting. Just bummed out," Shanahan said. "Exactly how you'd expect. But, BA is a strong dude and a spiritual guy. He believes everything happens for a reason, so he'll be all right. But definitely a little down last night. I was just telling him how bad I felt for him and just let him know we're all here for him through this."

Aiyuk, who signed a \$120 million, four-year extension in late August following a lengthy contract "hold in," has 25 catches for 374 yards this season. He was a second-team All-Pro last season when he had 1,342 yards receiving.

Tagovailoa cleared, could return Sunday for Dolphins

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. —

Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa has been cleared by medical experts to play football again after he collided with Bills defensive back Damar Hamlin in Week 2 when he ran for a first down and then initiated the contact by lowering his shoulder into Hamlin instead of sliding.

He still technically needs to be

cleared from the NFL's concussion protocol before he returns, which could come after he practices on Wednesday. If everything goes well, coach Mike McDaniels said, the plan is for Tagovailoa to start Sunday against the Arizona Cardinals.

"I don't mess with timelines or try to overcook the forecast," McDaniels said. "You lean on experts for matters of the career, and that's what we're doing here."

Tagovailoa has traveled across the country over the past month meeting with numerous medical experts, who he and McDaniels said deemed it safe for him to play football again. He was not told he would be at increased long-term risk if he resumed his career.

Browns QB Watson suffers season-ending Achilles tear

CLEVELAND — Deshaun Watson won't finish the season as Cleveland's starting quarterback for the second straight year.

Watson ruptured his right Achilles tendon in the first half of Sunday's loss to Cincinnati. The team feared Watson's year was over and an MRI on Monday confirmed the rupture. The Browns said Watson will have surgery this week and miss the rest of the season but "a full recovery is expected."

It's the second significant injury in two seasons for Watson, who broke a bone in his throwing shoulder last year. He also had surgeries on both knees after tearing ligaments while at Clemson and playing for Houston.

Now needing help at quarterback for another season, Cleveland signed Bailey Zappe from Kansas City's practice squad. Zappe gives the Browns some protection behind Dorian Thompson-Robinson and Jameis Winston, who could start this week against Baltimore.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyle Murray hands the ball off to running back James Conner during the first half against the Los Angeles Chargers on Monday in Glendale, Ariz. The Cardinals won 17-15.

Murray, Cards top Chargers on game-ending field goal

BY DAVID BRANDT

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Arizona's Kyle Murray rolled out to his left before turning on the jets, beating a Chargers defender to the sideline and then coasting for a spectacular 44-yard touchdown, casually holding the ball with one hand like it was a backyard game.

Cardinals coach Jonathan Gannon admitted that's not the way his players are taught to protect the ball.

Then again, Gannon didn't teach Murray how to run like that, either.

"Until he fumbles, I'll let him ride," Gannon said with a wry grin. "That was a pretty spectacular play."

Murray ran for the game-changing touchdown early in the fourth quarter and then led the Cardinals on a drive that set up Chad Ryland's 32-yard field goal as time expired, and Arizona rallied for a 17-15 win over Los Angeles on Monday night.

Cameron Dicker kicked his fifth field goal of the night — this one from 40 yards — to give the Chargers a 15-14 lead with 1:54 left. But the Cardinals (3-4) quickly moved into field-goal range, aided by an unnecessary roughness call on Cam Hart that cost Los Angeles (3-3) 15 yards.

Arizona followed that with a bruising 33-yard catch and run by James Conner, who finished with

101 yards on the ground and 51 yards receiving. Conner's big gain eventually set up Ryland's short field goal and a Cardinals celebration. Conner delivered a sterling speech to the team on Sunday night and backed up those words on Monday.

"That's just the way the season's been going," Conner said. "As a captain on this team, that's the job description. Just tried to rally the troops."

It was a frustrating night for the Chargers' offense, which gained 395 yards but couldn't find the end zone. Justin Herbert completed 27 of 39 passes for 349 yards. It was coach Jim Harbaugh's first loss on Monday night, dropping him to 6-1 for his career.

Dicker booted field goals of 59, 50, 28, 47 and 40 yards, the first of which tied a franchise record for distance.

The Chargers came into the game with one of the NFL's top defenses and had another good night, but the offense usually couldn't execute when it mattered most. Los Angeles has gone 16 consecutive offensive drives without a touchdown.

"I thought we did a lot of good things, but we've got to score points in the red zone," Herbert said. "That's the biggest takeaway from tonight's game. We've got an amazing kicker, but we've got to do a better job for our defense and

special teams. We've got to score points."

Murray ran for his spectacular touchdown early in the fourth quarter for the 14-9 lead. It was his second long touchdown run in three weeks after he scored on a 50-yard sprint against San Francisco.

"It's a good feeling, just putting the ball in the end zone," Murray said. "Wish we could have done that more tonight, but a win's a win."

It was also Murray's 20th career game with a touchdown pass and run.

Murray completed 14 of 26 passes for 145 yards, one touchdown and one interception.

Dicker's 28-yarder late in the third quarter gave the Chargers a 9-7 lead. Los Angeles gained possession after stopping Cardinals backup quarterback Clayton Tune on third-and-1 and fourth-and-1. The Cardinals sometimes use Tune in short-yardage situation because he's bigger than Murray.

Arizona scored on a 5-yard touchdown pass from Murray to Greg Dortch in the second quarter to take a 7-6 lead into halftime. It was Dortch's first touchdown catch of the season.

Dicker made two field goals in the first half for the Chargers, including the 59-yarder. That was the longest kick of Dicker's career after he previously made two from 55 yards.



EAKIN HOWARD/AP

San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Brandon Aiyuk is helped off the field after suffering a knee injury in Santa Clara, Calif., on Sunday.

NFL

Scoreboard

American Conference						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	5	2	0	.714	199	136
Miami	2	4	0	.333	70	129
N.Y. Jets	2	5	0	.286	128	145
New England	1	6	0	.143	99	175
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	5	2	0	.714	165	159
Indianapolis	4	3	0	.571	155	149
Jacksonville	2	5	0	.286	145	194
Tennessee	1	5	0	.167	106	144
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	5	2	0	.714	218	180
Pittsburgh	5	2	0	.714	161	101
Cincinnati	3	4	0	.429	178	166
Cleveland	1	6	0	.143	109	162
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	6	0	0	1.000	146	103
Denver	4	3	0	.571	145	106
L.A. Chargers	3	3	0	.500	106	83
Las Vegas	2	5	0	.286	124	183

National Conference						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	5	2	0	.714	218	152
Philadelphia	4	2	0	.667	134	115
Dallas	3	3	0	.500	126	168
N.Y. Giants	2	5	0	.286	99	149
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	4	3	0	.571	163	169
Tampa Bay	4	3	0	.571	209	182
New Orleans	2	5	0	.286	177	180
Carolina	1	6	0	.143	110	243
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	5	1	0	.833	182	120
Minnesota	5	1	0	.833	168	107
Green Bay	5	2	0	.714	186	143
Chicago	4	2	0	.667	148	101
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	4	3	0	.571	180	164
Arizona	3	4	0	.429	150	178
San Francisco	3	4	0	.429	180	158
L.A. Rams	2	4	0	.333	114	154

Sunday's games
 Jacksonville 32, New England 16
 Buffalo 34, Tennessee 10
 Cincinnati 21, Cleveland 14
 Detroit 31, Minnesota 29
 Green Bay 24, Houston 22
 Indianapolis 16, Miami 10
 Philadelphia 28, N.Y. Giants 3
 Seattle 34, Atlanta 14
 L.A. Rams 20, Las Vegas 15
 Washington 40, Carolina 7
 Kansas City 28, San Francisco 18
 Pittsburgh 37, N.Y. Jets 15
Open: Chicago, Dallas

Monday's games
 Baltimore 41, Tampa Bay 31
 Arizona 17, L.A. Chargers 15

Thursday, Oct. 24
 Minnesota at L.A. Rams

Sunday, Oct. 27
 Arizona at Miami
 Atlanta at Tampa Bay
 Baltimore at Cleveland
 Green Bay at Jacksonville
 Indianapolis at Houston
 N.Y. Jets at New England
 Philadelphia at Cincinnati
 Tennessee at Detroit
 Buffalo at Seattle
 New Orleans at L.A. Chargers
 Carolina at Denver
 Chicago at Washington
 Kansas City at Las Vegas
 Dallas at San Francisco

Monday, Oct. 28
 N.Y. Giants at Pittsburgh

Thursday, Oct. 31
 Houston at N.Y. Jets

Sunday, Nov. 3
 Dallas at Atlanta
 Denver at Baltimore
 Miami at Buffalo
 New Orleans at Carolina
 Las Vegas at Cincinnati
 L.A. Chargers at Cleveland
 Washington at N.Y. Giants
 New England at Tennessee
 Jacksonville at Philadelphia
 Chicago at Arizona
 Detroit at Green Bay
 L.A. Rams at Seattle
 Indianapolis at Minnesota

Ravens top Bucs for 5th straight win

By FRED GOODALL
 Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Lamar Jackson, who may be playing the best football of his career, made it look easy.

The two-time MVP threw for 281 yards and five touchdowns Monday night, helping the Baltimore Ravens overcome an early double-digit deficit and extend their winning streak to five games with a 41-31 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who lost their top two receivers to injuries.

“Trying to win. That’s all that’s on my mind,” Jackson said after the AFC North co-leaders scored on seven of nine possessions before removing him from the game with just under two minutes left.

“I’m proud of him. I’m happy for him. He’s a great leader, a great player,” coach John Harbaugh added. “He’s the ultimate competitor on a level with the greatest competitors I’ve ever seen.”

Jackson improved to 23-1 against NFC teams, the best mark by a quarterback against an opposing conference in NFL history. He’s 3-0 against the Bucs (4-3), who faded after taking a 10-0 lead with help from the 100th TD reception of Mike Evans’ career.

Evans departed with a hamstring injury after Baker Mayfield tried to connect with him in the end zone again, and late in the fourth quarter with the game out of reach, leading Bucs receiver Chris Godwin was carted off the field with a left ankle injury. ESPN declined to show replays of Godwin’s injury, which appeared to be severe.

“Early indication is that it’s dislocated. Doesn’t look good,” said Bucs coach Todd Bowles, who defended the decision to still have Godwin on the field in the closing minutes.

Jackson completed 17 of 22 passes without an interception, including TD throws of 9 and 4 yards



PETER JONELEIT/AP

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson leaps over a defender during a game against the Buccaneers on Monday in Tampa, Fla. Jackson threw for 281 yards and five touchdowns in the Ravens’ 41-31 win.

to Mark Andrews. He also tossed scoring passes of 49 yards to Rashod Bateman, 18 yards to Justice Hill and 11 yards to Derrick Henry, who rushed for 169 yards on 15 carries. Bateman had four catches for 121 yards.

The Ravens (5-2) rebounded from a slow start on defense, with cornerback Marlon Humphrey turning the game around with a pair of second-quarter interceptions — one of them in the Baltimore end zone. Jackson led a four-play, 80-yard TD drive after the first pick, and the second interception set up Justin Tucker’s 28-yard field goal for a 17-10 halftime lead.

“It doesn’t matter when, where or what. He’s the ultimate competitor,” Andrews said of Jackson. “It’s just play after play after play of him making big-time plays and

helping this team win games. He does it better than anybody in the league. He lays it all out on the line every game. He’s the best. He’s the MVP.”

Mayfield finished 31-for-45 passing for 370 yards, three TDs and two interceptions. Evans joined Hall of Famers Jerry Rice, Randy Moss, Marvin Harrison and Terrell Owens as the only players to have at least 100 TD receptions in the first 11 seasons of a career when he caught a 25-yard scoring pass in the first quarter.

The Bucs played at home for the first time since Hurricane Milton made landfall on Florida’s Gulf Coast, causing extensive damage in the Tampa Bay area and along the path it took across the state. The Bucs relocated ahead of the storm to New Orleans, where they

practiced for four days before trouncing the Saints 51-7 last week.

The Ravens lead the the NFL with 1,476 rushing yards this season and have run for at least 150 in every game. With 243 on the ground Monday night, they became the fourth team since 1980 to begin a season with at least 1,400 yards in their first seven games. The others are the 1984 Chicago Bears (1,508), 2006 Atlanta Falcons (1,476) and 2019 Ravens (1,429).

Henry’s touchdown catch midway through the fourth quarter made it 41-18. The Bucs scored twice in the closing minutes, including after a successful inside kick, the second time the Ravens have failed to recover an opponent’s inside kick this season.

Tampa Bay loses WRs Evans, Godwin to injury

By FRED GOODALL
 Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The sight of Mike Evans stretched out on the ground in the back of the end zone, then limping off with a hamstring injury was bad enough. When Tampa Bay’s other top receiver, Chris Godwin, went down in the closing minute of a 41-31 loss to the Baltimore Ravens, an already frustrating night got more disappointing for the Buccaneers.

“Got a heavy heart right now,” quarterback Baker Mayfield said. “It’s never something you want to see happen to any of your guys.”

Evans left the game early after earlier catching a 25-yard TD pass from Mayfield to become the



Evans

Godwin

11th player in NFL history with at least 100 touchdown receptions in a career.

Godwin injured his left ankle late in the fourth quarter with the game out of reach, leaving coach Todd Bowles to explain why Godwin — off to the best start of his career — was still on the field. Especially with Evans already hobbled with what the Bowles de-

scribed last week as a nagging injury.

“He’s a player. We’re trying to win the ballgame. We were still down 10, we’re trying to get extra points and kick another inside kick,” Bowles said. “It just happened. With Mike (Evans) going down, we didn’t have that many receivers left as it was, so we play what we got.”

Evans, who missed two days of practice last week, appeared to aggravate the injury on the scoring reception. Mayfield nearly connected with him in the end zone again in the second quarter, but this time the ball glanced off Evans’ hands as he and Ravens cornerback Brandon Stephens

went to the ground.

Evans remained on the the ground for several minutes before being helped to his feet and limping to the locker room.

Mayfield said he can’t remember ever being part of a team that lost two players in the same game who mean as much as Godwin and Evans do to the Bucs.

“Definitely not two of the guys that are the huge heartbeat of this team,” the quarterback said.

“But like I said, we have to find a way. ... We’re going to be playing for first place in the division next week at home against Atlanta,” Mayfield added. “Got to have guys step up. That’s just the way it is. There’s no other way around it.”

SPORTS



Ravens remain hot

Jackson leads Baltimore to fifth straight victory » **NFL, Page 23**



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Forward Jayson Tatum, center, holds the Larry O'Brien Trophy as he celebrates with center Kristaps Porzingis, left, and guard Jaylen Brown after Boston won the NBA title in June.

Tough to stay on top

With six champs in six years, dynasties may be in past

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
Associated Press

It was a few minutes after Denver's reign as NBA champion had come to an end last spring. The Minnesota Timberwolves were celebrating, their music and screams loud enough to be heard inside the room where Nuggets coach Michael Malone was somberly going through his final postgame news conference of the season.

In that moment, it was official: Another season was going by without

the NBA having a back-to-back champion, and Malone was left to state what has become obvious.

"It is hard. It is hard. It is hard to repeat," Malone said. "It's hard to win."

He's right. And there's never been an era in NBA history where it's been harder.

Here are the last six NBA champions, in order: Toronto, the Los Angeles Lakers, Milwaukee, Golden State, Denver and now Boston. That's six different title-winning franchises in six seasons, a run

of parity that the league has seen only once before — nearly a half-century ago.

The days of dynasties may be on hold for now, replaced by a time when, for a variety of reasons, it's more difficult than usual to get to the NBA mountaintop and stay there. It's the Celtics' turn to try to buck that trend.

"It's always hard to win one," said Boston guard Jrue Holiday, who won a title with Milwaukee in 2021 and was part of

SEE DYNASTIES ON PAGE 19

Karl-Anthony Towns helped Minnesota reach the Western Conference finals last season, but is playing in New York now.

DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP



Dodgers got contributions from all over » World Series, Page 21



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