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Debate over Ukraine's use of weapons sows division

BY ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN, SIOBHÁN O'GRADY, MICHAEL BIRNBAUM AND ELLEN FRANCIS
The Washington Post

KYIV, Ukraine — The United States' lingering refusal to relax restrictions on Ukraine's use of Western missiles for deeper strikes on Russian territory has exacerbated a growing divide between the allies — with Kyiv angry over yet another setback in slowing Russia's assault across the country while its biggest back-

er considers the possibility of Moscow's backlash.

The latest ask by Kyiv — to receive permission to use the U.S.-supplied Army Tactical Missile



Zelenskyy

Systems, or ATACMS, and other longer-range munitions to reach targets such as strategic airfields deeper inside Russia — will be made by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy personally during his meeting with President Joe Biden in Washington this week.

But in an example of the widening disconnect between the two sides more than two years into Russia's invasion, the Ukrainians had expected Biden to have already granted permission by now, according to two officials who, like others in this article, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter.

The discussion is ongoing in Washington, splitting the Biden administration and Capitol Hill, and it has confounded America's partners in Europe, several of

SEE WEAPONS ON PAGE 6

'Proud to protect'



PHOTOS BY CAITLYN BURCHETT/Stars and Stripes

The Morales family clings to each other and waves American flags as the USS Harry S. Truman deploys Monday from Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The family's sailor, 19-year-old Alexis Morales, is deploying for the first time with the Truman and its strike group.

Family, friends gather as aircraft carrier USS Truman deploys to Middle East

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

NORFOLK, Va. — "Just one more!" Cecilia Gamboa shouted, throwing her arms around her daughter, Machinist's Mate Gianna Rodriguez.

"Seven months is nothing compared to a lifetime," Rodriguez said, hugging her mother.

Then, after smoothing out her dress whites and saying her final "I love you," Rodriguez disappeared into a group of sailors making their way down the pier toward the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman.

Dozens of family members and friends gathered Monday at Naval Station Norfolk to wish the crew of



Sailor Gianna Rodriguez hugs a family member before climbing aboard the USS Harry S. Truman on Monday.

the Truman fair winds and following seas ahead of a deployment that is expected to take the warship's strike group into the Middle East.

Sailors stoically stood on the flight deck, manning the rails in their dress whites, as the carrier was pushed off the pier. The warship will be joined at sea in the coming days by its strike group, which includes Carrier Air Wing 1 with nine aviation squadrons, guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg, and two guided-missile destroyers, the USS Stout and the USS Jason Dunham.

For now, the Truman strike

SEE TRUMAN ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Boeing makes final offer; union says not enough

Associated Press

Boeing said Monday it made a "best and final offer" to striking machinists that includes bigger raises and larger bonuses, but the workers' union said the proposal isn't good enough and there won't be a ratification vote before Boeing's deadline at the end of the week.

The union complained that Boeing publicized its latest offer to 33,000 striking workers without first bargaining with union negotiators.

"Boeing does not get to decide when or if you vote," leaders of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers district 751 told members Monday night. "The company has refused to meet for further discussion; therefore, we will not be voting" on Friday, as Boeing insisted.

Boeing said that after two days of talks last week with federal mediators failed to produce an agreement, "we presented a best and final offer that made significant improvements and addresses feedback from the union and our employees."

The new offer is more generous than the one that was overwhelmingly rejected earlier this month. The company said the offer includes pay raises of 30% over four years, up from 25% in the first proposal. The union originally demanded 40% over three years.

The new offer — and labeling it a final one — demonstrates Boeing's eagerness to end the strike that began Sept. 13.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Sept. 25)	\$1.09	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3768
British pound (Sept. 25)	\$1.31	Britain (Pound)	1.3382
Japanese yen (Sept. 25)	139.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3493
South Korean won (Sept. 25)	1299.00	China (Yuan)	7.0319
		Denmark (Krone)	6.6914
		Egypt (Pound)	48.6902
		Euro	0.8974
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7863
		Hungary (Forint)	354.61
		Israel (Shekel)	3.7605
		Japan (Yen)	143.88
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3052
		Norway (Krone)	10.4268
		Philippines (Peso)	56.06
		Poland (Zloty)	3.83
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7516
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.2871
		South Korea (Won)	1332.45
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8473		
Thailand (Baht)	32.76		
Turkey (NewLira)	34.1239		

(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	5.33
3-month bill	4.65
30-year bond	4.09

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

No plan to fix 'digital quarterback' deficiencies

Inspector general: Navy isn't tracking problems during tests

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's battle manager in the sky has been crippled by scores of deficiencies and no plan to fix them, the Defense Department Inspector General said in a report that cast doubt on whether the service can accomplish critical missions at sea.

The E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft, easily recognizable for the dish-shaped antenna mounted above its fuselage, delivers air and missile defense data to aircraft carrier groups, among other roles.

However, the Navy "is budgeted to spend \$22 billion to acquire a total of 80 (E-2D) aircraft and has already fielded 62 aircraft that do not meet the required performance capabilities," the IG said.

That's because the Navy isn't tracking problems found during operational testing, the report determined.

The IG found 141 operational deficiencies weren't fixed as of February. That's about two-thirds of the total deficiencies found dur-

ing seven operational tests performed from 2011 to 2020, the report noted.

The critical shortfalls were mostly redacted but in citing one such problem, the IG noted that "the radar is the aircraft's primary means to detect and track land and sea contacts."

The few deficiencies released publicly included problems with crew seats locking into place for landing aboard an aircraft carrier, and an obscured view on a tracking screen that affected the crew's ability to detect an object as soon as possible.

The first E-2D was delivered to the Navy in 2007 by Northrop Grumman, which continues to manufacture and upgrade the aircraft it calls the Navy's "digital quarterback." Acquisition is expected to finish in 2026 with the Navy planning to fly the aircraft into the 2040s, according to the IG report.

The Navy contracted with Northrop Grumman to provide software and hardware modifica-

tions from 2014 to 2027. Those modifications include improvements to radar, satellite communications and electronic protection, among other upgrades, the IG said.

The report also found that of the 141 unaddressed deficiencies, about 45% were considered to have a critical or serious impact to mission success. Another 34 deficiencies not covered by the IG's report were reported in May.

The IG also noted that DOD's office of the director of operational test and evaluation, or DOT&E, has consistently reported reliability issues with the aircraft's radar and the inability of the Navy to keep the aircraft maintained and available.

"The DOT&E recommended that the Navy correct these issues but as of 2024, the recommendations remained unresolved," the IG said. "These limitations may preclude the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye from accomplishing the mission requirements."

The E-2/C-2 Airborne Com-



JOSHUA SAPIEN/U.S. Navy

An E-2D Advanced Hawkeye lands on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson while underway in the Pacific Ocean, June 12.

mand and Control Systems Program Office, or PMA-231, which is responsible for tracking the deficiencies, admitted it didn't have a central system allowing it to do so.

The IG recommended that the Navy establish a process to track the aircraft's deficiencies. The report also said the service should evaluate all unresolved deficien-

cies and note whether action was taken.

The Navy also should create a plan to correct the deficiencies that impact mission accomplishment, the IG said.

The Navy concurred with the recommendations and said all actions would be completed by Dec. 1.

Mobile armored launchers receive positive feedback after test

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Breaking in the U.S. Army's latest mobile armored launcher was all in a day's work recently for a group of artillerymen in the rural reaches of northeastern Bavaria.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery were the first in the service to receive 27 M270A2 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, battalion commander Lt. Col. Benjamin Roark said Tuesday. The launchers arrived in July.

After weeks of instruction and certification drills, the 330-man unit from Tower Barracks in Grafenwoehr fired the new system for the first time Sept. 12. The M270A2 is replacing the A1 variant, which entered service in a previous format in 1983.

Spc. Matthew Bauer, a gunner from Bravo Battery, lauded the new vehicle for its spaciousness, increased survivability and hydraulics, which tilt the cab for maintenance.

"These are still relatively new, and they're just being field-tested," Bauer said. "So there will be improvements in the future, with the software as well as the vehicle."

Many of the soldiers polled Tuesday at the unit's motor pool thought it was too soon to say whether the A2 is better than its predecessor and more easily maintained.



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery's Bravo Battery inspect their M270A2 Multiple Launch Rocket System at the battalion's motor pool in Grafenwoehr, Germany, on Tuesday. The new mobile armored launcher was fired at the Grafenwoehr Training Area for the first time on Sept. 12.

It will be further tested during exercise Dynamic Front next month in Finland.

The A2 variant is over 10,000 pounds heavier with revamped armor, fire control systems and rebuilt transmissions that soldiers hope will reduce the time needed to work on it in the maintenance bay.

The M270A1 is an armored launcher mounted on a stretched

Bradley chassis. It is crewed by a three-man team equipped with two containers capable of firing either 12 rockets or two ATACMS guided missiles with a range of up to 190 miles.

The A2 builds off the specifications of the A1 but can be equipped with four precision strike missiles capable of hitting targets over 300 miles away.

The Army received the missiles

in December 2023 and chose not to put them on the A1, given that it was at the end of its life cycle.

The new tracks also have the same fire control system as the Army's wheeled variant, the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, which makes for easier cross-training, Roark said.

"The soldiers were happy with them," he said. "They drive a little



The M270A2 Multiple Launch Rocket System, seen here in Grafenwoehr, Germany, on Tuesday, can fire an assortment of rockets, ATACMS guided missiles or precision strike missiles.

bit different as far as the new engine, transmission, so the soldiers have to learn how to drive them, as far as modulating the throttle and stuff like that, but it's positive feedback from the ground up."

Soldiers during the Grafenwoehr testing experienced some minor issues, which Bauer said were reported up the chain.

Switches on his vehicle's accelerator and brakes had a tendency to shake loose when his crew was driving, he said. That nixes any planned fire mission.

Also, tow cables aren't strong enough to pull the heavier A2 variant, so a tow bar is needed, Bauer said.

"But other than that, they're pretty sweet," he said.

PACIFIC

Navy discloses submarine visit to S. Korea

USS Vermont arrival marks the first stop in Busan that's been revealed since December

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — A U.S. fast-attack submarine and its crew of around 130 sailors arrived at South Korea's largest port on Monday, the first stop in Busan by a U.S. sub that's been disclosed since December.

The USS Vermont's visit to the city, about 200 miles south of Seoul, is a scheduled port visit, Submarine Group 7 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Samuel Boyle said in an emailed statement Monday.

The sub's visit "reflects our commitment to the region and complements the many exercises, training, operations, and other military cooperation activities," he wrote.

No additional details were provided. The Navy and U.S. Forces Korea do not disclose how long U.S. warships are docked in South Korea as a matter of policy, citing operational security.

The Vermont was docked in Busan to replenish its supplies and allow its crew to rest, South Ko-

rean navy spokesman Choi Jong-il said during a news conference Tuesday.

The Vermont was commissioned in 2020 and is homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

At least three U.S. submarines made port calls on Busan last year. The USS Missouri, Kentucky and Michigan last docked there on Dec. 16, July 17, 2023, and June 16, 2023, respectively.

One of those, the Ohio-class USS Kentucky, is capable of carrying

nuclear-tipped strategic ballistic missiles.

The Navy does not disclose whether its subs are carrying nuclear weapons.

Earlier this year, President Joe Biden reaffirmed to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol that Seoul is "backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities, including nuclear," according to a White House news release July 11.

"Any nuclear attack by [North Korea] against the [South] will be met with a swift, overwhelming

and decisive response," the release said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un earlier this month called for his country to boost its nuclear weapons production, citing threats from the United States and South Korea.

Pyongyang is forced to bolster its nuclear arsenal because it is "constantly exposed to a serious nuclear threat," Kim said in a speech in Pyongyang, according to a Sept. 9 report by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers stand near a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense launcher last year on Guam. The THAAD is one of the options for defending Guam from missile attacks.

Former destroyer captain pitches faster, cheaper solution for defending Guam

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon should rethink its plans for missile defense on Guam and consider less expensive technology with a lighter footprint, according to a former Navy destroyer captain.

Retired naval officer J.D. Gainey called for a pause on plans for Guam's Enhanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense System during an online forum Friday.

Gainey, who specializes in Indo-Pacific security, commanded the USS Hopper, an Aegis-equipped destroyer, and was part of a 2018 effort to plan to defend Guam from air and missile attacks, according to the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, the group that sponsored the forum.

After retiring from the Navy, Gainey joined the board of the Virginia-based nonprofit that lobbies for missile defense, deployment and development, according to its website. The threat to Guam includes ballistic, cruise and hypersonic missiles, Gainey said during the forum, noting that China has demonstrated the ability to target forces at a range of 2,000 miles.

The Missile Defense Agency's

plan to defend Guam calls for up to 20 new military sites across the island, to be operational by 2027.

"The MDA and the Army need to strategically locate and integrate various system components, including a command and control center, radars, sensors, missile launchers, missile interceptors, and support facilities, at multiple sites around Guam," the agency states on its website.

However, Gainey said the cost of the dispersed missile defense system will be astronomical.

"We need to take a pause," he said, before adding that the requirement to defend the island remains the same, along with the need to be ready by 2027.

The U.S. military projects air and sea power from Guam, its westernmost Pacific territory.

The cost of planned military construction on the island will likely increase beyond a projected \$60 billion, alliance chairman Riki Ellison said during the forum.

Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping has said he wants his military ready to invade Taiwan by 2027, Ellison said.

"There has to be capabilities to

defend against the best threats that China is deploying," he said.

The Navy would probably assign four Aegis destroyers to defend Guam in a crisis if the island's land-based missile defense system isn't ready, Ellison said.

Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers are equipped with the Aegis Combat System, which uses high-tech radars and computers to track enemy missiles so they can be shot down with interceptor missiles.

The distributed missile defense system planned for Guam involves truck-mounted, mobile launchers. That plan requires numerous safe areas where missile booster rockets may fall, up to 1,000 service members and support services such as schools and a commissary, said Mark Montgomery, a retired Navy rear admiral and an alliance board member.

A better option against a hypersonic missile threat would be a pair of vertical launch systems, of the type installed on Aegis destroyers, defend Andersen Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam, Montgomery said during the forum. That plan could be ready in 2½ years.

Third service member charged with sexual assault on Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese prosecutors last week charged a U.S. Marine on Okinawa with sexually assaulting and injuring a woman this summer, the third such case on the island since December.

Lance Cpl. Michael Hofmaster, 20, was charged Friday by the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office in connection with a June 21 incident in Nago city, according to the indictment.

Prosecutors allege Hofmaster grabbed the woman by the shoulders, pushed her onto a bed and sexually assaulted her, according to the indictment. He also "caused lacerations in her vagina that required a month to heal, including seven days of hospitalization."

Hofmaster is with the 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group at Camp Hansen, III Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman 1st Lt. Owen Hitchcock said by email Monday. Hofmaster is in Japanese custody, he said.

The Marine Corps is "cooperating with all appropriate local authorities throughout the process," Hitchcock wrote.

"The alleged behavior does not reflect the core values of the U.S. Military," he said. "The U.S. Military goes to great lengths to instill these values in every Marine through regular education and training throughout their service."

Okinawa Prefectural Police forwarded Hofmaster's case to the prosecutor's office on Sept. 5, a spokesman for the office said that day. Hofmaster at the time was confined to military installations in Japan, according to III MEF.

The woman is older than 20 and was an acquaintance of Hofmaster, a spokesman for the police investigation team said Sept. 5. Medical personnel who treated the woman reported it to police, the spokesman said.

Some Japanese government officials are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

This case follows indictments of two U.S. service members by Japanese prosecutors on separate charges of sexual assault and attempted sexual assault that came to light over the summer and roiled Okinawa.

Senior Airman Brennon R.E. Washington pleaded not guilty July 12 in Naha District Court to charges of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor in December. Marine Lance Cpl. Jamel Clayton was charged in May with attempting to sexually assault a woman in Yomitan.

Those cases led to formal complaints from the prefecture to the U.S. Embassy, U.S. military and the Japanese government and calls for changes to the status of forces agreement governing the U.S. military population in Japan.

U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Ricky Rupp announced in July a "new forum of cooperation" with the Japanese and Okinawan governments and community members.

The Marine Corps has increased courtesy patrols in Okinawa's popular nightlife spots in response to the incidents.

Rupp, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel and III MEF commander Lt. Gen. Roger Turner have called for consistent liberty policies for all U.S. troops in Japan. But so far, no changes have been announced.

MILITARY

Airlines add US-Italy routes near US bases

By REBECCA HOLLAND
Stars and Stripes

Defense Department personnel serving in Italy could have an easier time traveling home starting next year, following new service announcements from Delta and American Airlines.

Beginning in May, Delta will run a four-times weekly service between Atlanta and Naples, where thousands of U.S. Navy sailors are based.

Also in May, the carrier will start offering a daily route serving

New York and Catania, becoming the first U.S. airline to offer direct flights to the Sicilian city, which is near Naval Air Station Sigonella.

Delta already operates a direct route between New York and Naples.

American Airlines announced this month that it will add a daily nonstop flight from Miami to Rome starting July 5, 2025.

Also, the airline's seasonal service between Philadelphia and Naples that began this summer will kick off on May 5 next year.

Italy hosts nearly 30,000 U.S. service members, DOD civilians and accompanying family members, according to the State Department. That's the second-largest permanent presence among countries in Europe.

Besides the two naval installations, the Pentagon has Aviano Air Base and U.S. Army Garrison Italy, which has posts in Vicenza and near Pisa.

In March, Delta brought back daily nonstop service between Atlanta and Venice and also be-

tween New York and Venice. The Vicenza base is about 40 miles west of the Venice airport and Aviano is slightly farther away to the north.

United Airlines has not announced its 2025 summer schedule yet. This year, it offered nonstop seasonal service between Rome and the U.S. cities of San Francisco, Chicago and Washington as well as Chicago-Milan and New York-Naples routes. The summer flights are on top of the airline's regular schedule, which

includes year-round nonstop flights from New York to Rome and Milan.

U.S.-based airlines aren't the only ones expanding service. As of June, Italian airline Neos has been operating a summer flight between New York and Palermo, Sicily. Saturday is the last day of operation this year on that route.

An estimated 216 million people were expected to visit Italy this summer, according to the Italian Federation of Tourism, which expects that number to grow in 2025.

Truman: Carrier trained for months on drone and missile strikes to prepare

FROM PAGE 1

group is deploying to the 6th Fleet area of responsibility, which spans approximately half of the Atlantic Ocean, from the North Pole to Antarctica, as well as the North, Adriatic, Baltic, Barents, Black, Caspian and Mediterranean seas, senior leaders said.

"This crew is ready to answer any call that our nation may have for us to answer," said Capt. Dave Snowden, commanding officer of the Truman.

The last time that the Truman deployed was in 2022 to provide air support in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This time, the warship is potentially deploying for a different kind of battle — drone warfare. The strike group has spent recent months training in the western Atlantic Ocean for a rare, pre-planned deployment expected to take the ship into the hostile environment of the Red Sea.

U.S. sailors and allies have fought almost daily for months to down drones and missiles launched by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen as tensions in the Middle East have raged on for nearly a year.

"Our world is a dynamic place where threats are emerging everywhere, all across the globe," said Rear Adm. Sean Bailey, commander of the Truman carrier strike group.

The Truman is deploying with a strike force of 90 aircraft, including F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets, E-2D Hawkeye command and control aircraft, E/A18 Growler electronic warfare jets and MH-60 Seahawk helicopters.

The senior commanders said the Truman strike group trained for a broad spectrum of missions but confirmed the group has leveraged lessons learned from other carrier strike groups deployed re-

cently in the region to prepare for a potential Red Sea mission.

"It has not necessarily changed how we focus our training," Bailey said, referring to the Red Sea. "But what it has done is it's given us more increased capability against those threats, as they emerge to ensure that we are fully trained to be ready wherever we may go."

In the past year, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has twice ordered two carriers to the region, as well as bolstering U.S. forces with an amphibious ready group and a nuclear-powered submarine.

The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, homeported in Virginia, was ordered in October 2023 to sail to the region after a deadly attack on Israel by Hamas militants. The aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, also East Coast-based, joined the Ford in the winter before the Ford returned to Norfolk. The Eisenhower completed an eight-month deployment to the region in July, being relieved by San Diego-based carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt.

In August, Austin ordered the extension of the Roosevelt as well as directed the USS Abraham Lincoln, also a West Coast-based carrier, to the Red Sea. The Roosevelt's and the Lincoln's time in the region overlapped by about three weeks before the Roosevelt was ordered to return home. The Lincoln and its strike group are still there.

"When we deploy, we never know what is going to be in store for us. It is a testament to previous carrier strike groups that were able to quickly pivot to go from one theater to another, go from one mission to another," Bailey said.

Hours before the ship departed, sailors lingered by the gates of the pier for last-minute goodbyes.



PHOTOS BY CAITLYN BURCHETT / Stars and Stripes

Hugo Morales waves American flags as the USS Harry S. Truman deploys Monday, from Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The Morales family's sailor, 19-year-old Alexis Morales, is deploying for the first time with the Truman and its strike group.



The aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman and a force of 6,500 sailors deployed Monday, on a mission that is expected to take the warship's strike group into the Middle East.

Seaman Mason Baker wrapped his mother, Clare Baker, with a hug. She traveled from North Carolina to see her son off on his first

deployment. An American flag was emblazoned across her shirt, which read, "My kid has your back."

Nearby, Gianna Rodriguez's family stood in the shadow of the ship's bow a few moments after she said goodbye. They wanted to watch her climb the brow and board the warship. Her mother, father and two sisters traveled from California to see the sailor off on her first deployment.

"She is proud to protect our country. As a mom, my heart is broken because we never want to let go of our children, but we have got to be proud that we raised them well enough. They are doing something big," Cecilia Gamboa said, wiping tears from her cheeks.

At about midday, the Truman was guided off the pier by tugboats. Dozens of families trickled down the pier, following the ship as far as the pier would allow.

When the ship turned to transit to the Chesapeake Bay and out to sea, a pod of dolphins appeared in the wake of the warship. It will be at least six months before the Truman Carrier Strike Group and its force of 6,500 sailors return home.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Weapons: Zelenskyy to make request to Biden this week

FROM PAGE 1

whom have publicly said they're in favor of granting the permission for more cross-border strikes using their missiles. For this article, Washington Post reporters interviewed more than a dozen officials in Ukraine, NATO member countries, and both the Biden administration and Congress to gauge the temperature of the fierce debate over the management of Ukraine's war.

So far, U.S. officials insist there is no indication that the White House will change its position on this. But the Ukrainians have heard that before. They point to a U.S. pattern of repeatedly denying their weapons requests — on modern tanks, fighter jets and longer-range missiles — before eventually giving the green light each time. And with the lengthy debates playing out in public, the Russians have always had time to prepare long before the new weapons reach the battlefield.

U.S. officials, for their part, express frustration about what they perceive as Ukraine's lack of understanding of their occasionally cautious approach even as they provide Kyiv with significantly more security assistance than anyone else. Russian President Vladimir Putin has framed his attack on Ukraine as part of a war against the West — the United States in particular — and Washington has often cited managing escalation with Moscow as a reason for not approving some of Ukraine's armament requests immediately.

It is a point of view strongly held by the campaign for Republican candidate Donald Trump as well, with his son co-writing an opinion piece in the Hill warning against nuclear conflagration if such permissions are given.

That rationale is mocked in Ukraine — where the daily Russian bombardment has killed thousands and Russian troops occupy more than 20% of the country. More frustrating for Ukrainians is seeing Russia receive a steady supply of critical weapons from Iran and North Korea.

"As it turns out, Russia has more decisive allies than we do," said Roman Kostenko, the secretary of the defense and intelligence committee in Ukraine's parliament. "It's shameful for the West."

In Zelenskyy's meeting with Biden this week, the Ukrainian delegation's priority is to pitch its secretive "victory plan" as an opportunity for Biden to leave office with a legacy of having helped Ukraine win the war against Russia. An important aspect of that plan is the ability to hit the Russians on their own territory. Russian glide bombs, converted munitions with guidance systems that are launched from aircraft, have been



ANDREW DICKSON/AP

U.S. Army Sgt. Ian Ketterling prepares the crane for loading the Army Tactical Missile System onto the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System last year in Queensland, Australia.

devastating Ukrainian front lines.

With Kyiv's limited air defense capabilities unable to prevent the glide bomb attacks, Ukrainian officials want to hit the planes launching these weapons while they are still on the airfields in Russia. But those runways are out of range of the Western weaponry they currently are permitted to use for cross-border strikes.

"We think the permission should be granted yesterday, not today or tomorrow," one Ukrainian official said. "Otherwise, the phrase 'We want to see Ukraine as strong as possible for any scenario' looks like total BS."

The Ukrainians also want more agency to pick their own targets, including energy infrastructure, such as oil depots, officials said. Those kinds of strikes can hurt Russia's economy, limiting its ability to fund the war effort, explained a senior Ukrainian military official. It's fair play, the official added, as Moscow has been pummeling Ukraine's power grid for the past two years, causing rolling blackouts throughout the country.

But Kyiv has long been dependent on receiving target coordinates for strikes with its precision Western weaponry from U.S. military personnel on a base elsewhere in Europe. Without those, the missile is likely to miss its mark, the military official said, and the United States has sometimes declined to provide coordinates for some of Kyiv's desired targets.

"The weapons are often used on what we would consider less important targets," the official said.

U.S. officials argue that Ukraine has such a limited stockpile of ATACMS and similar munitions that opening up Russian territory to strikes would make only a limited impact on the battlefield and could lead to the missiles running out in a matter of weeks, or even days.

White House and Defense Department officials say that they have not heard a convincing argument from Ukrainian leaders that the possible targets within missile range in Russia would make a significant difference in Ukraine's path to victory. They say that using the missiles against targets in Crimea, as Ukraine has done so far, is a more worthwhile strategy that has already forced the Kremlin to pull forces back from the peninsula.

One U.S. official maintained that this request is different from past ones because it is not worth the risk of a Russian escalation. Because the stockpile of missiles is limited and Russia has already pulled 90% of the jets launching glide bombs out of ATACMS range, a changed U.S. policy would not reshape the course of the fighting.

But European military officials and diplomats emphatically disagreed that allowing the longer-range strikes into Russia would only have limited impact and condemned the policy of refusing to lift the restrictions on Western weapons.

"On the technical and strategic level, it doesn't make sense. It's actually stupid," one Western military official said, adding that NATO's own military doctrine calls for deep strikes behind enemy lines.

While the United States' greenlighting of deeper missile strikes into Russia would not be enough on its own for Ukraine to win the war, the official said, it would help disrupt Russian logistics, target command centers and weapon depots. In addition, the longer the wait for permission, the less effective the long-range strike capability will eventually be.

Ukrainian and European officials said they've already recorded the Russians using the airfields closest to Ukraine's border less. Military aircraft now use these

landing strips for just a quick stop to refuel or maintenance.

"There's no doubt that if there is a decision on this now, to allow these weapons to be used, some of the advantage has already been squandered through this timorousness," said Keir Giles, an analyst at the London-based Chatham House think tank.

One Ukrainian official suggested that the new American argument about the lack of effectiveness of cross-border strikes probably emerged "because the previous excuse is not working anymore."

A European diplomat in Kyiv said they believed Ukraine launched its recent incursion into Russia's Kursk region in part to make a statement to the West that Putin's red lines can be crossed without fear of major retaliation, such as the use of nuclear weapons.

But Russia still can escalate elsewhere in ways that make the Biden administration's life more difficult on the world stage, U.S. officials said, by arming the Houthi militia group in Yemen that has been threatening maritime traffic in the Red Sea, for example, or handing nuclear know-how to Iran, or increasing its campaign of sabotage attacks in Europe.

Those considerations aren't enough to dissuade the Biden administration from taking any confrontational steps against Russia — Ukraine has been using U.S. weaponry on Russian soil in its attack on the Kursk region in ways that stretch the previous rules of engagement for U.S. military aid — but in the specific case of ATACMS, the benefits of allowing strikes on Russian soil are not compelling enough to outweigh the drawbacks, the officials said.

Still, there are splits within the administration: Even after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made clear his firm opposition to

loosening the rules around ATACMS strikes, Secretary of State Antony Blinken indicated this month in a visit to Kyiv that he was open to the Ukrainian arguments and would ultimately bring them back to Biden for a broader discussion in Washington.

That discussion is ongoing, officials said, with those inside the National Security Council trying to manage the differences between the Defense Department and the State Department.

U.S. officials say that they would have preferred that Ukraine pursue its requests in private. But the Ukrainians counter that this public pressure campaign was born out of desperation after the private approach was rejected. The downside, of course, is that it telegraphs their plans to Russia.

One Western diplomat said that it was normal for such decisions to take time and that even if the debate is public, it doesn't necessarily give Russia a military advantage, "but it gives them an in into who is the weakest link in the chain. It gives them leverage in terms of messaging and playing into our fears."

Some European countries have joined Ukraine's call for the United States to lift its restrictions, and diplomats said they wouldn't rule out a U.S. policy shift in a war that has seen the goal posts repeatedly move. Britain and France are also providing longer-range missiles to Ukraine, and both have been vocal in supporting Ukraine using their munitions on Russian territory.

Britain's foreign secretary, David Lammy, however, appeared to be lowering expectations that Ukraine's allies would make a quick decision over whether to allow Ukraine to fire their long-range missiles deep into Russia. He told the BBC a week ago that the matter would be discussed with Ukraine by its allies at the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York.

"These decisions come with a risk that is not small," said a European official. "But in general, on the question of whether it's an escalatory risk or is Putin bluffing, you never really know. The decisions are not made in fear of that."

While Ukrainian officials are quick to express their gratitude for any foreign military assistance, they also point out that they're paying the highest price. And any delays on weapons use cost the lives of their soldiers, they say.

"It's time to choose," said Mykola Bieliesskov, an analyst linked to Ukraine's presidential office. "Now you can't sit on two chairs simultaneously. You need to take one chair. The balancing act is a byproduct of crisis management instead of good strategy."

MILITARY

Navy replenishment oiler runs aground in Mideast

BY SHANNON RENFROE AND ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — A replenishment oiler supporting the only carrier strike group in the Middle East ran aground Monday, as U.S. forces work to deter a wider regional war amid escalating fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

A U.S. Navy official confirmed that USNS Big Horn grounded within the 5th Fleet's area of responsibility, which includes the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Gulf of Oman, among other waters. There were no reported injuries.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss matters yet to be made public, added that no other ships were directly affected and that there were no reports or sightings of fuel spills.

On Tuesday, the maritime forum and news site Captain posted photos and video that it says shows flooding and damage to the ship's rudder post. The Navy did not confirm the authenticity of the photos and video.

USNS Big Horn was underway to supply fuel and other resources to the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its escorts.

The oiler is the third Military Sealift Command-operated vessel to run aground in just over a year.

In May, the expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams grounded while departing the port of Libreville, Gabon. Officials reported no damage or injuries, but the ship languished in port for several days, waiting for an inspection before it could continue underway.

About two months later, the Navy relieved its gold crew captain,

one of the ship's two crew commanders.

That came after the release of an investigation in May into the grounding of the cargo ship USNS Alan Shephard in Bahrain in July 2023. The report revealed that the ship's civilian master had left a junior officer in charge while he went to dinner, contributing to the incident.

The grounding Monday marks the latest challenge for the Military Sealift Command, which operates around 125 civilian-crewed ships responsible for replenishing Navy vessels, pre-positioning combat cargo at sea and conducting specialized missions, according to the command's website.

Some of these ships, such as the U.S. 6th Fleet flagship USS Mount Whitney, are crewed by civilian mariners and active-duty sailors.

The USNS Big Horn is one of 15



U.S. Navy

The fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn sails alongside the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln on Sept. 11, during a replenishment-at-sea. Big Horn ran aground in Middle East waters Monday, the Navy said.

replenishment oilers operated by MSC, with a crew of up to 89 civilian mariners and five military personnel.

The Navy is replacing its current class of oilers, which were first commissioned in 1987.

While three new John Lewis-class oilers have been delivered, they have not yet entered service. Three are under construction and three more are under contract, ac-

ording to the Navy.

However, analysts have raised serious concerns about the sealift command's ability to crew these ships, citing a critical shortage of civilian manpower.

The sealift command has proposed sidelining 17 ships and re-allocating their mariners to other vessels to make up for the crew shortage. The Navy is reviewing the proposal.

Camp Lejeune Marines face rape, conspiracy charges

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Police in Surf City, N.C., on Monday charged two Marines stationed at Camp Lejeune with rape, officials in the small beach town near the base said.

Ted Arthur Davis, 23, and Rylie Tate Petrosky, 20, were in jail Monday after an initial appearance in court, Surf City officials said. A judge granted them a \$300,000 secured bond in that hearing, but the suspects had not been released as of Monday afternoon.

Davis was charged with first-degree forcible rape, felony conspiracy and providing alcohol to a

person under 21, according to police. Petrosky was charged with first-degree forcible rape and felony conspiracy. The rape charges carry a minimum penalty of 12 years imprisonment up to a life sentence, according to North Carolina law.

It was not clear Monday when the suspected rape occurred, but police described the incident as an "isolated case." Town officials said the Marines knew the victim, who was receiving support via a

victim's advocate.

Police officials said they could release no further information Monday "to protect the victim's identity and the integrity of the case."

Surf City Police Chief Phillip Voorhees said the investigation was ongoing.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Onslow County Sheriff's Office, the Camp Lejeune Provost Marshal's Office and the Wilmington Police Department have assisted in the



Davis



Petrosky

Navy's new future nuclear-powered submarine to be named USS Baltimore

Stars and Stripes

The future Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarine SSN 812 will be named USS Baltimore, secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced Friday during a ship naming ceremony in Baltimore.

"The city of Baltimore maintains a strong connection with our maritime services and is a critical enabler of our National Maritime Statecraft," Del Toro. "It is my honor and privilege to announce the name of the next Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarine, SSN-812, USS Baltimore."

Maryland Sen. Ben Cardin joined Del Toro for the ceremony,

held aboard the historic USS Constellation.

"Maryland is proud of our connection to the Navy and our strong history as a coastal state," Cardin said. "I am excited that the next USS Baltimore will be sailing the seas again as the Navy's newest submarine."

The city of Baltimore has significant ties to American and Naval history. Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott touched on the honor and meaning behind the naming of the Navy's newest submarine.

"We are honored that Baltimore is being represented across the globe once again with the naming of this future ship," Scott said. "As

a city with such a rich naval and maritime history, the naming of the USS Baltimore ensures that legacy will continue to live on for decades to come. I want to extend my deepest thanks and gratitude to the U.S. Navy for this honor and for continuing to uplift our city, including all Baltimoreans who choose to serve."

Virginia-class submarines incorporate innovations that increase firepower, maneuverability and stealth, according to the Navy.

They are capable of supporting multiple mission areas and can operate at speeds of more than 25 knots for months at a time.

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NATION

Trump says he'd handle Ukraine 'differently'

Bloomberg News

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said he would approach Ukraine policy “differently” and marveled at Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s requests for security assistance.

“I see Zelenskyy is here. I think Zelenskyy is the greatest salesman in history — every time he comes into the country, he walks away with \$60 billion,” Trump said during a rally Monday in Pennsylvania ahead of the United Nations General Assembly.

Trump added that he believed the Ukrainian leader wanted his Democratic opponent, Kamala Harris, to win the election “so badly” and said he would look to push Ukraine and Russia to the negotiating table if he won the election.

“If I win this election, the first thing I’m going to do is call up Zelenskyy and call up President Putin and I say, ‘You got to make a deal, this is crazy,’” Trump said at the event in Indiana, Pa.

Trump’s comments came as

Zelenskyy is set to meet with Harris and President Joe Biden on Thursday to present his “victory plan” to end the war started by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Zelenskyy plans to ask the United States to support another push to join the NATO alliance and commit to a sustained supply of advanced weapons.

Zelenskyy, who toured a Pennsylvania ammunition plant Sunday, suggested in an interview that Trump did not understand

the complexity of the conflict and had made “political statements” during his debate against Harris, in which the Republican sidestepped a question about whether he wanted Kyiv to prevail in the conflict.

“My feeling is that Trump doesn’t really know how to stop the war even if he might think he knows how,” Zelenskyy told *The New Yorker*. “With this war, oftentimes, the deeper you look at it the less you understand.”

The Ukrainian leader also

called Trump’s running mate, JD Vance, “too radical” and criticized the U.S. senator from Ohio for advocating for a demilitarized zone between Ukraine and Russia.

“The idea that the world should end this war at Ukraine’s expense is unacceptable,” Zelenskyy said. “But I do not consider this concept of his a plan, in any formal sense. This would be an awful idea, if a person were actually going to carry it out, to make Ukraine shoulder the costs of stopping the war by giving up its territories.”



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Former President Donald Trump meets with farmers at an event Monday at a farm in Smithton, Pa.

Trump threatens John Deere with tariffs at rural Pa. farming event

Associated Press

SMITHTON, Pa. — Donald Trump sat in a large barn in rural Pennsylvania on Monday, asking questions of farmers and offering jokes but, in a rarity for his campaign events, mostly listening.

The bombastic former president was unusually restrained at an event about China’s influence on the U.S. economy, a roundtable during which farmers and manufacturers expressed concerns about losing their way of life. Behind Trump were large green tractors and a sign declaring “Protect our food from China.”

The event in Smithton, Pa., gave Trump a chance to drive his economic message against Vice President Kamala Harris, arguing that imposing tariffs and boosting energy production will lower costs. He highlighted Harris’ reversal of a previous vow to ban fracking, a method of producing natural gas key to Pennsylvania’s economy.

And he noted the tractors behind him were manufactured by John Deere, which announced in June it was moving skid steer and track

loader manufacturing to Mexico and working to acquire land there for a new factory. Trump threatened the firm with a 200% tariff should he win back the presidency and it opted to export manufacturing to Mexico.

“If they want to build in the United States, there’s no tariff,” he added.

Trump opened the event with some of his usual themes. He declared that in 2020: “We had an election that didn’t exactly work out too good. And it was a disgrace.”

But he then did something unusual: He let others do most of the talking.

When one farmer said recent decades had seen scores of family farms shut down, Trump asked what that meant for overall production. The response was that, thanks to larger farms now operating, total production is actually up but “we are losing the small family farms.”

“I know that, yes,” Trump responded somberly. Later, he said, “I am not too worried about the

people around this table” supporting him on Election Day, while jokingly adding, “But you never know.”

In response to another participant’s concerns about energy production, Trump said he didn’t know that farmers were so energy-dependent. Another farmer talked about Chinese-subsidized businesses, prompting Trump to respond, “That’s why we need tariffs.”

After the same farmer finished her comments by praising him profusely, he intoned: “Amen. I agree.”

Trump has embraced tariffs as he tries to appeal to working-class voters who oppose free-trade deals and the outsourcing of factories and jobs, and the event wasn’t all about showing a more personable side.

Later, the former president took questions from reporters and got more customarily combative when asked whether he was concerned that tariffs on manufacturers like John Deere would increase costs for farmers.

Thieves ruin EV chargers while hunting for copper

Bloomberg News

Rick Wilmer spends most of his work days at the office. But every so often, the chief executive officer of ChargePoint Holdings Inc. will make his way to the company’s laboratory in San Jose, Calif., where he dons safety glasses and wields an array of saws and shears against EV chargers. The goal: to approximate the rash of vandalism sweeping the 65,000 U.S. cords under ChargePoint’s care.

“It’s all over the country,” Wilmer says. “The types of stuff we’ve seen happen is just horrifying in terms of the way they go about it and how frequently it happens.”

ChargePoint isn’t alone. This year through June, nearly one in five U.S. public charging attempts ended in failure, according to JD Power; roughly 10% of those aborted sessions were due to a damaged or missing cable. While some of the destruction is without agenda — the same spray-paint and baseball-bat havoc that affects vending machines and delivery robots — charging executives say much of the damage has a specific, profit-based motive: copper.

There have been similar reports of vandalism in Europe, and in May Instavolt Ltd. — a U.K. charger operator — warned of a crackdown on cord theft. But the mayhem comes at a particularly tough time in the U.S., where sales of electric cars are flagging. A reliable charging network is key to dousing drivers’ range anxiety, and charging companies are eager to disabuse EV-skeptical consumers of the notion that public stations are inconvenient, slow and often broken.

Vandalizing a public EV plug isn’t much more complicated than stealing a bicycle. Charging stations tend to be inconspicuous, tucked into the quiet corners of shopping centers and municipal parking lots. Almost all of them are unmanned, and cutting a cord can be as simple as severing it from the station with a hacksaw.

Vandalism is “front and center

for us and has been really since the start of the year,” says Anthony Lambkin, vice president of operations at Electrify America, which manages about 1,000 charging stations in North America. In 2024 so far, vandals have cut 215 of the company’s cords, up from 79 in the year-earlier period.

FLO, which runs just under 3,700 charging stations in North America, has also seen an uptick in vandalism this year, though it says most damage to its cables is accidental.

Recently, seven of the company’s fast-charging cords were cut in a single week.

Wilmer has that beat: On one day this summer, thieves cut multiple cords at the station just outside ChargePoint’s Silicon Valley headquarters. And across the company’s network, four in five vandalism cases involve cut cords. Nationwide, charging executives say the issue is more pronounced in urban centers, with particularly consistent problems in Las Vegas, Seattle, and Oakland, Calif.

Many of these cord bandits are on the hunt for copper. The metal is a critical vein in the fast-growing circulatory system of public charging, and prices have roughly doubled since a nadir in early 2020. Construction, tech gadgets and the strengthening U.S. economy at large are also driving up copper demand.

The profit motive is reflected in the nature of the vandalism, which is often more organized than opportunist. Groups of thieves will cut every cord in a station, taking it offline entirely. Electrify America has also seen copper wiring mined from its charging units, and from underground conduits. EV-go Inc., which operates nearly 1,000 U.S. stations, has security footage of perpetrators wearing uniforms to make themselves look like utility workers or technicians.

“Ultimately, there needs to be a larger law enforcement response to this,” says Sara Rafalson, EV-go’s executive director of policy.

NATION

Severe obesity in US climbs in last decade

By JONEL ALECCIA
Associated Press

Obesity is high and holding steady in the U.S., but the proportion of those with severe obesity — especially women — has climbed since a decade ago, according to new government research.

The U.S. obesity rate is about 40%, according to a 2021-23 survey of about 6,000 people. Nearly 1 in 10 of those surveyed reported severe obesity, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found. Women were nearly twice as likely as men to report severe obesity.

The overall obesity rate appeared to tick down vs. the 2017-20 survey, but the change wasn't considered statistically significant; the numbers are small enough that there's mathematical chance they didn't truly decline.

That means it's too soon to know whether new treatments for obesity, including blockbuster weight-loss drugs such as Wegovy and Zepbound, can help ease the epidemic of the chronic disease linked



M. SPENCER GREEN/AP

A subject's waist is measured during an obesity prevention study in Chicago in January 2010.

to a host of health problems, according to Dr. Samuel Emmerich, the CDC public health officer who led the latest study.

"We simply can't see down to that detailed level to prescription medication use and compare that to changes in obesity prevalence,"

Emmerich said. "Hopefully that is something we can see in the future."

Most telling though, the results that show that the overall obesity rate in the U.S. has not changed significantly in a decade, even as the rate of severe obesity climbed

from nearly 8% in the 2013-14 survey to nearly 10% in the most recent one. Before that, obesity had increased rapidly in the U.S. since the 1990s, federal surveys showed.

Measures of obesity and severe obesity are determined according to body mass index, a calculation based on height and weight. People with a BMI of 30 are considered to have obesity; those with a BMI of 40 or higher have severe obesity. BMI is regarded as a flawed tool but remains widely used by doctors to screen for obesity.

"Seeing increases in severe obesity is even more alarming because that's the level of obesity that's most highly associated with some of the highest levels of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and lower quality of life," said Solveig Cunningham, an Emory University global health professor who specializes in obesity.

Cunningham, who was not involved in the new study, said it's not clear why rates of severe obesity are going up, or why they were higher among women. Factors

could include the effects of hormones, the impact of childbearing or other causes that require further study, she said.

The new study also found that obesity rates varied by education. Almost 32% of people with a bachelor's degree or higher reported having obesity, compared with about 45% of those with some college or a high school diploma or less.

The new report follows the release earlier this month of data from U.S. states and territories that showed that in 2023, the rate of obesity ranged widely by place, from a high of more than 41% of adults in West Virginia to a low of less than 24% of adults in Washington, D.C. Rates were highest in the Midwest and the South.

All U.S. states and territories posted obesity rates higher than 20%. In 23 states, more than 1 in 3 adults had obesity, the data showed. Before 2013, no state had a rate that high, said Dr. Alyson Goodman, who leads a CDC team focused on population health.

Colo. supermarket gunman gets 10 consecutive life sentences

By COLLEEN SLEVIN
Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — A mentally ill man who killed 10 people at a Colorado supermarket in 2021 was sentenced Monday to life in prison for murder after a jury rejected his attempt to avoid prison time by pleading not guilty by reason of insanity.

Victims' relatives recounted in pained testimony the lives gunman Ahmad Alissa destroyed in the 2021 attack in the college town of Boulder.

"To the person that's done this, we hope that you suffer for the rest of your life. You are a coward," said Nikola Stanic, whose only sibling, Neven, was killed. "I hope this haunts the defendant until the end of time. The defendant deserves the absolute worst."

Stanic recalled going out for ice cream with her brother the night before he was shot and how he would sometimes help her with bills. Their household — once filled

with talk and laughter — is now mostly silent, she told the court.

Defense attorneys did not dispute that Alissa, who has schizophrenia, fatally shot 10 people including a police officer. But they argued he was insane at the time of the attack and couldn't tell right from wrong. He became the latest person to fail in an attempt to be acquitted by reason of insanity.

In addition to first-degree murder, the jury found Alissa guilty on 38 charges of attempted murder, one count of assault, and six counts of possessing illegal, large-capacity magazines.

Judge Ingrid Bakke sentenced him to 10 consecutive life prison sentences without the possibility of parole for the murders and an additional 1,334 years for the other offenses.

"This was not about mental illness. This was about brutal, intentional violence," District Attorney Michael Dougherty said.

Alissa, now 25 years old, declined through his attorneys to make a statement during his sentencing.

The courtroom was packed largely with victims' families and police, including officers shot at by Alissa. Several members of Alissa's family sat behind him.

Alissa started shooting immediately after getting out of his car in a King Soopers store parking lot in March 2021. He killed most of the victims in just over a minute and surrendered after an officer shot him in the leg.

The daughter of killed Officer Eric Talley lamented the life milestones they would not be able to share. But Madeline Talley said she would not hold onto bitterness and forgave Alissa.

"He taught me to believe that God brings good out of evil," Madeline Talley said of her father.

Others weren't ready to forgive. Robert Olds — whose niece, Rikki, was killed — said Alissa's family



COLORADO JUDICIAL BRANCH/AP

Ahmad Alissa, third from left, stands for the verdict in his trial for the 2021 Colorado supermarket shootings on Monday in Boulder, Colo.

should have been held criminally responsible because their "ignorance, inattentiveness and inaction" led directly to the attack.

Alissa did not visibly react as the verdict was read. During sentencing, he looked at times toward the victims' relatives as they spoke. For much of the time he sat hunched over, talking to his attorney or writing.

Defense attorneys later declined comment.

Prosecutors had to prove Alissa was sane. They argued he didn't fire randomly and showed an ability to make decisions by pursuing people who were running and trying to hide from him. He twice passed by a 91-year-old man who continued to shop, unaware of the shooting.

Kmart's blue light goes black with shuttering of last full-scale US store

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Attention, Kmart shoppers, the end is near!

The erstwhile retail giant renowned for its Blue Light Specials — featuring a flashing blue orb affixed to a pole enticing shoppers to a flash sale — is shuttering its last full-scale store in mainland United States.

The store, located in swank Bridgehampton, N.Y., on Long Island, is slated to close Oct. 20, according to Denise Rivera, an employee who answered the phone at the store late Monday. The manager wasn't available, she said.

That will leave only a small Kmart store in Miami. It has a

handful of stores in Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Transformco, the company that bought the assets of Sears and Kmart out of the bankruptcy of Sears Holdings in 2019, did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment.

In its heyday, there were more than 2,000 Kmarts in the U.S.

Struggling to compete with Walmart's low prices and Target's trendier offerings, Kmart filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in early 2002 — becoming the largest U.S. retailer to take that step — and announced it would close more than 250 stores.

A few years later, hedge fund executive Edward Lampert com-

bined Sears and Kmart and pledged to return them to their former greatness. But the 2008 recession and the rising dominance of Amazon contributed in derailing that mission. Sears filed for Chapter 11 in 2018 and now has just a handful of stores left in the U.S., where it once had thousands.

NATION

Humanitarian parole sought for children in Haiti

55 families asking US government for decision on 70 kids they look to adopt

By DÁNICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — At only 6 years old, Esai Reed has endured three emergency evacuations from orphanages across Haiti as gangs pillage and plunder their way through once peaceful communities.

He is now in northern Haiti under the care of a U.S. organization after the director of Esai's last orphanage fled the troubled Caribbean country where gangs control 80% of the capital.

Nearly five months have passed since the last evacuation, and in that time, Esai, who loves soccer and is mischievous, hasn't been able to talk to his adoptive mother in the U.S. or his two older brothers who live with her as internet connections and other logistics falter.

"Clearly, this is an emergency," said Michelle Reed, a 51-year-old teacher and single mother who lives in Florida.

Reed's is one of 55 families from Tennessee to California asking the U.S. government for humanitarian parole for some 70 children they're adopting. It was an opportunity the U.S. granted to more than a dozen other children earlier this year when gangs attacked key government infrastructure and forced Haiti's main international airport to close for nearly three months, prompting evacuations of dozens of U.S. citizens and 39 children from March to May who had final adoption decrees.

Reed and other families said they were initially told they would be part of the evacuation group, but the U.S. government later said that "despite intensive efforts," it had not found a solution to allow children without adoption decrees to leave Haiti and enter the U.S., according to a letter from the office of children's issues at the State Department.

"We understand that this update will be disappointing for both you and your child(ren)," the of-

ice wrote.

Reed and other families warned that completing the adoption process in Haiti instead of in the U.S. as requested forces the children to travel to Port-au-Prince, which is largely under siege by gangs, to obtain a visa, passport and medical exam.

"Why aren't they doing that for our kids?" asked Emmerson, who lives in the U.S. and requested that his last name be withheld for safety since he and his wife, who are adopting his niece and nephew, have family in Haiti.

Reed noted that the Haitian Central Adoption Authority has given the families permission for the children to leave the country and complete the adoption in the U.S.

But a State Department spokesperson told The Associated Press that other Haitian authorities overseeing the adoption process do not agree. It added that it's working with the Haitian government "to move adoptions forward as quickly as possible" while ensuring that laws, regulations and obligations are met.

"The Department is working to expedite final processing steps for additional children," it said, adding that all Haitian government offices that process adoptions are open, "although some offices could be intermittently closed or operating at limited capacity due to localized violence."

The department said it "understands and empathizes with the concerns and frustration of U.S. families adopting from Haiti."

Stéphane Vincent, director of Haiti's Directorate of Immigration and Emigration, did not return messages for comment.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security told the AP that consideration for parole applies "to a very limited number of Haitian adoptees" who have reached a specific stage in their process. It said that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services "is working



RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

Haitian children walk hand in hand as they await the arrival of their adoptive parents in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 2010.

tirelessly" with U.S. government partners "to navigate the current circumstances."

Aside from the dangers of being in Port-au-Prince, families note their cases could be further delayed because Haitian judges have been on strike while others have left the country because of the violence.

The U.N. noted in a recent report that ever since Haiti's judicial year started in October 2023, "courts have been operational for barely ten days."

Backing the families in their push to obtain humanitarian parole are lawmakers including U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown, Marco Rubio and Rick Scott, who have written the U.S. State Department and the Department of Homeland Security on their behalf.

Haiti has been under a state of emergency for several months, and the State Department has long upheld a "do not travel" advisory, warning of kidnappings, killings, sexual assault and other crimes, adding that "the U.S. government is very limited in its ability to help U.S. citizens in Haiti."

From April to June, at least 1,379 people were reported killed or injured, and another 428 kidnapped, according to the U.N., which noted that 88% of those

crimes were in Port-au-Prince.

Meanwhile, gang violence has left at least 700,000 people homeless in recent years, half of them children, William O'Neill, the U.N. independent human rights expert on Haiti, said Friday.

"All indicators remain extremely worrying," he said during his visit to Haiti. "The first and most concerning of them, insecurity."

Meanwhile, Kenyan police who arrived in late June as part of a U.N.-backed mission to help quell gang violence only recently launched joint operations with Haiti's police and military as the U.S. ponders a U.N. peacekeeping operation after warning that the current mission lacks resources.

"The children are at great risk," said Diane Kunz, executive director for the New York-based nonprofit Center for Adoption Policy. "You have the State Department saying they can't guarantee the protection of their own people."

In Florida, Reed worries about Esai as she tries to comfort his brothers, ages 8 and 10, who were physically abused, sick and malnourished when she adopted them nearly two years ago.

"The boys are afraid for him, and they don't want to talk about it," she said, adding that no one told her they had a brother when

she adopted them.

Reed recalled how, after arriving in the U.S., her two older sons slept in a single twin bed despite having two available and held each other through the night.

"Nighttime was scary for them," Reed said. "They had nightmares for a long time."

Angela, who lives in California and asked that her last name be withheld for safety, said she and her husband are trying to adopt a 5-year-old girl who — like Reed's youngest son — has been evacuated from orphanages three times.

Angela recalled how she was on the phone with an orphanage worker and her daughter when gunfire erupted.

She said it's terrifying to think that her daughter, who is shy and loves to read books, will have to travel to Port-au-Prince to complete the required paperwork after violence forced her to flee the city.

"It's just not right for these children to be thrown into the war zone to meet requirements that could easily be waived," Reed said. "We are not looking to bypass any part of the adoption process. We want our children evacuated to safety so we have children to adopt. We don't want them to die in Haiti."

Fla. officials pressure schools to roll back sex ed lessons

AP/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Some Florida school districts are rolling back a more comprehensive approach to sex education in favor of abstinence-focused lessons under pressure from state officials who have labeled certain instruction on contraception, anatomy and consent as inappropriate for students.

Officials from the Florida Department of Education, led by an appointee of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, have been directing some of the state's largest school

districts to scale back their lesson plans not only on sexual activity, but on contraceptives, human development, abuse and domestic violence, as first reported by the Orlando Sentinel.

The shift reflects a nationwide push in conservative states to restrict what kids can learn about themselves and their bodies.

Advocates are concerned that young people won't reliably be taught about adolescence, safe sex or relationship violence at a time when sexually transmitted in-

fections have been on the rise and access to abortion is being increasingly restricted.

Under recent changes to state law, it's now up to the Florida Department of Education to sign off on school districts' curriculum on reproductive health and disease education if they use teaching materials other than the state's designated textbook.

About a dozen districts across Florida have been told by state officials to restrict their sex ed instruction plans, said Elissa Barr, a professor of public health at the

University of North Florida and the chair of the Florida Healthy Youth Alliance, which advises school districts on developing and implementing comprehensive sex education programs.

Barr says comprehensive sex ed isn't just about reducing teen pregnancy and protecting young people against HIV.

"Sex ed is sexual abuse prevention. It's dating violence prevention. And it just helps young people develop healthier relationships and actually delay sexual initiation," Barr said.

NATION

Calif. is latest to limit phones in school

AP/Report for America

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — School districts in California will have to create rules restricting student smartphone use under a new law Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Monday.

The legislation makes California the latest state to try to curb student phone access in an effort to minimize distractions in the classroom and address the mental health impacts of social media on children. Florida, Louisiana, Indi-

ana and several other states have passed laws aimed at restricting student phone use at school.

"This new law will help students focus on academics, social development, and the world in front of them, not their screens, when they're in school," Newsom said.

But some critics of phone restriction policies say the burden should not fall on teachers to enforce them. Others worry the rules will make it harder for students to seek help if there is an emergency

or argue that decisions on phone bans should be left up to individual districts or schools.

"We support those districts that have already acted independently to implement restrictions because, after a review of the needs of their stakeholders, they determined that made the most sense for their communities with regards to safety, school culture and academic achievement," said Troy Flint, a spokesperson for the California School Boards Association. "We

simply oppose the mandate."

The law requires districts to pass rules by July 1, 2026, to limit or ban students from using smartphones on campus or while students are under the supervision of school staff. Districts will have to update their policies every five years after that.

The move comes after Newsom signed a law in 2019 authorizing school districts to restrict student phone access. In June, he announced plans to take on the issue

again after the U.S. surgeon general called on Congress to require warning labels on social media platforms and their effects on young people.

The governor then sent letters to districts last month, urging them to limit student device use on campus. That came on a day that the board for the second-largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified, voted to ban student phone use during the school day beginning in January.

Vouchers ease start-up stress as demand for Christian schools rises

BY HOLLY MEYER

Associated Press

Florida pastor Melvin Adams knows a few hours of church programming every week is no match for the more than 30 hours children spend at secular schools, absorbing lessons that he says run counter to their family's Christian beliefs.

Like other theologically conservative pastors in Florida and beyond, he decided his Nazarene church in the Orlando suburbs could do something about it. Now the inaugural semester of Winter Garden Christian Academy is underway at Faith Family Community Church, educating K-4th grade students within the church's biblical worldview.

"We're making disciples and we're doing it not just on Sundays, but we're doing it all week long," said Adams. "I feel like we do have a leg up here in Florida."

The state has an expansive voucher program in which taxpayers help to pay tuition for all families who want to send their kids to private schools. While that's not the primary reason Faith Family Community and other churches are launching Christian schools on their campus, the vouchers have made it easier.

It's not about hurting public schools, said pastor Jimmy Scroggins, whose Family Church in South Florida is hoping to launch three classical Christian schools over the next year. Rather, he said it's about giving parents more schooling options that align with their Christian values.

Family Church is responding to an ongoing demand that rose out of heightened, pandemic-era scrutiny of what children were being taught in public schools about gender, sexuality and other contentious issues, he said. In Christian classrooms, pastors say religious beliefs can inform lessons on morals and character building,

teachers are free to incorporate the Bible across subjects, and the immersive environment may give students a better chance of staying believers as adults.

"Our hope is to help accelerate this movement of Christian education. ... That every Christian church with a building will consider starting or hosting a neighborhood school," said Scroggins. "We're not trying to burn anything down. We're trying to build something constructive."

Scroggins makes his case in "The Education Reformation: Why Your Church Should Start a Christian School," a new book he co-wrote with Trevin Wax of the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board. Scroggins' large, multisite church also is Southern Baptist.

They have company in their cause from school voucher advocates.

On the national level, for example, Family Research Council senior fellow Joseph Backholm made a similar argument in his 2020 report, "Why Every Church Should Start a Christian School," while pushing for more public funding for private education. At the state level, the Ohio Christian Education Network launched a school planting initiative for churches in 2021.

"We believe the church has a responsibility to rise up and meet what we see as an educational crisis in the United States," said Troy McIntosh, the network's executive director. So far, they've helped start two schools and hope to add more, likely beginning as small learning environments known as microschoools, he said.

Ohio passed so-called universal school choice — taxpayer money available for private school tuition without income limits — in 2023. They were part of a wave of pro-school voucher laws passed in Arizona, Florida, West Virginia and



JOHN RAOUX/AP

First grade teacher Sharon Parsons helps her students with a lesson at the Winter Garden Christian Academy on Aug. 29, in Winter Garden, Fla.

other states following key Supreme Court rulings. This year, universal school choice became an official national Republican Party policy, including equal treatment for homeschooling.

In addition to discrimination concerns and church-state issues, opponents worry school vouchers take money from public schools, which serve most U.S. students, and help higher-income families already in private schools.

"The problem isn't churches starting schools. The problem is taxpayer funding for these schools, or any private schools," said Rachel Laser, president of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, in a statement. School vouchers, she said, "force taxpayers to fund religious education — a clear violation of religious freedom."

Most private schools are religious, though not all are sponsored by a specific house of worship.

Conservative Christian schools accounted for nearly 12% (3,549) of the country's private options during the 2021-22 academic year, according to the latest data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Private School Universe Survey. While they're not the largest group, enrollment is

growing at conservative Christian schools. Total enrollment jumped about 15% (785,440) in 2021, compared to 2019.

Melissa Erickson, director and co-founder of Alliance for Public Schools in Florida, said she has fought vouchers for years along with other policies that hurt a public school system continually vilainized as the problem, even as it serves most children in the state.

"They want the benefits of the public funding without the requirements that public schools have to go through. It's very concerning that there's no accountability," said Erickson, who is seeing "homeschool collectives or small individual churches that never thought of going into the education business, now going into it because there's this unregulated stream of money."

The public school-Sunday school clash has flared up before with disagreements about human origins to prayer in class, said Jeff Walton, executive director of the American Association of Christian Schools. Today, the accreditation group is seeing school growth, especially from Southern Baptist churches, and enrollment increasing among its more than 700 member schools, he said.

"It's not an opposition to public education in principle. It's an opposition to where public schools have gone ideologically in a lot of communities, and that frustrates Christian parents," said Walton, noting the conflicting messages are hard on children.

The first semester is underway at one Southern Baptist church in West Virginia. South Berkley Baptist's Christian academy, which accepts the state's Hope Scholarship voucher, is starting off with less than 10 students and individualized learning, said pastor Patrick McCoy, who is pursuing school accreditation.

The school came about after McCoy started substitute teaching at area public schools a couple years ago. He said there he found good people, and little being taught on hot-button ideologies, but a clear need for strong Christian education.

"They're failing in preparing them for adulthood," said McCoy, who is worried for the future of public-school funding since he expects more parents will use vouchers for private education.

"We've got to attack this problem head-on," he said. "Since they're not doing it, somebody needs to do it."

WORLD

In UN farewell, Biden hopeful on peace prospects

Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Joe Biden declared the U.S. must not retreat from the world, as he delivered his final address to the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday as Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon edged toward all-out war and Israel's bloody operation against Hamas in Gaza neared the one-year mark.

Biden used his wide-ranging address to speak to a need to end the Middle East conflict and the 17-month-old civil war in Sudan and to highlight U.S. and Western allies' support for Kyiv since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

His appearance before the international body also offered Biden one of his last high-profile opportunities as president to make the case to keep up robust support for Ukraine, which could be in doubt if former President Donald Trump, who has scoffed at the cost of the war, defeats Vice President Kamala Harris in November. Still, Biden insisted that despite global conflicts, he remains hopeful for the future.

"I've seen a remarkable sweep of history," Biden said. "I know many look at the world today and see difficulties and react with despair but I do not."

"We are stronger than we think" when the world acts together, he added.



SETH WENIG/AP

President Joe Biden addresses the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday, at U.N. headquarters.

Biden came to office promising to rejuvenate U.S. relations around the world and to extract the U.S. from "forever wars" in Afghanistan and Iraq that consumed American foreign policy over the last 20 years.

"I was determined to end it, and I did," Bi-

den said of the Afghanistan exit, calling it a "hard decision but the right decision." He acknowledged that it was "accompanied by tragedy" with the deaths of 13 American troops and hundreds of Afghans in a suicide bombing during the chaotic withdrawal.

But his foreign policy legacy may ultimately be shaped by his administration's response to two of the biggest conflicts in Europe and the Middle East since World War II.

"There will always be forces that pull our countries apart," Biden said, rejecting "a desire to retreat from the world and go it alone." He said, "Our task, our test, is to make sure that the forces holding us together are stronger than the forces pulling us apart."

The Pentagon announced Monday that it was sending a small number of additional U.S. troops to the Middle East to supplement the roughly 40,000 in the region. All the while, the White House insists Israel and Hezbollah still have time to step back and de-escalate.

Biden has seemed more subdued in recent days about the prospects of Israel and Hamas agreeing to a temporary cease-fire and hostage deal. But he insists that he hasn't given up.

Biden used his remarks to condemn the "horrors" of the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 and said hostages taken by the group are "are going through hell." He added, "Innocent civilians in Gaza are also going through hell." Biden also condemned settler violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank.

Biden reiterated his call on the parties to agree to a cease-fire and hostage release deal, saying it's time to "end this war" — even as hopes for such a deal are fading.

Israeli military says it killed a top Hezbollah commander

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Israel said it killed a top commander with Hezbollah's missile and rocket unit Tuesday as the Israeli military traded fire with Hezbollah again and the death toll from a massive Israeli bombardment climbed to nearly 560 people.

Military officials said Ibrahim Kobeisi, who joined Hezbollah in the 1980s, was responsible for launches toward Israel and planned a 2000 attack in the Mount Dov region in which three Israeli soldiers were kidnapped and killed.

He was killed in a strike on Beirut, the military said, adding that "other key commanders" were with Kobeisi at the time of the strike. But officials did not say whether any of the oth-

ers were killed or wounded.

Meanwhile, thousands of people fled from southern Lebanon with the two sides on the brink of all-out war. Displaced families slept in shelters hastily set up in schools in Beirut and the coastal city of Sidon. With hotels quickly booked to capacity or rooms priced beyond the means of many families, those who did not find shelter slept in their cars or in parks.

Issa Baydoun fled Shihine in southern Lebanon when it was bombed and came to Beirut in a convoy with his extended family. They slept in their vehicles on the side of the road after discovering that the shelters were full.

"We struggled a lot on the road just to get here," he said. Baydoun rejected Israel's con-

textion that it hit only military targets.

"We evacuated our homes because Israel is targeting civilians and attacking them," he said. "That's why we left our homes, to protect our children."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon said Tuesday that one of its staffers and her young son were among those killed Monday in the Bekaa region, while a UNHCR-contracted cleaner was killed in a strike in the south. The husband of a staffer and one of her children were seriously wounded.

Well-wishers offered up empty apartments or rooms in their houses in social media posts. Volunteers set up a kitchen to cook meals for

the displaced at an empty Beirut gas station that first became a hub for volunteers after the city's devastating 2020 port explosion.

In the eastern city of Baalbek, the state-run National News Agency reported that lines formed at bakeries and gas stations as residents rushed to stock up on supplies in anticipation of another round of strikes on Tuesday.

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah said it launched missiles overnight and in the morning at eight sites in Israel, including an explosives factory in Zichron Yaakov, 37 miles from the border. The Israeli military said Tuesday that 55 rockets were fired from Lebanon into northern Israel, setting fires and damaging buildings.

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EUROPE

Swiss police detain several, use of 'suicide capsule' suspected

Associated Press

GENEVA — Police in northern Switzerland said Tuesday that several people have been detained and a criminal case opened in connection with the suspected death of a person in a new "suicide capsule."

The "Sarco" suicide capsule, which has never been used before, is designed to allow a person sitting in a reclining seat inside to push a button that injects nitrogen gas into the sealed chamber. The person is then supposed to fall asleep and die by suffocation in a few minutes.

Prosecutors in Schaffhausen canton were informed by a law firm that an assisted suicide involving the Sarco had taken place Monday near a forest cabin in Merishausen, regional police said in a statement. It said "several people" were taken into custody and prosecutors opened an investigation on suspicion of incitement and accessory to suicide.

Exit International, an assisted suicide group based in the Netherlands, has said it is behind the 3D-



AHMAD SEIR/AP

Philip Nitschke, an Australian former physician behind the assisted suicide group Exit International, is seen inside a "suicide pod" known as "The Sarco" in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, on July 8.

printed device that cost over \$1 million to develop.

In a statement, the group said a 64-year-old woman from the U.S. Midwest — it did not specify further — who had suffered from "severe immune compromise" had died Monday afternoon near the German

border using the Sarco device.

Philip Nitschke, an Australian former physician behind Exit International, has previously told the AP that his organization received advice from lawyers in Switzerland that use of the Sarco would be legal in the country.

Sweden: Iran behind texts critical of Quran burnings

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Swedish authorities accused Iran on Tuesday of being responsible for thousands of text messages that were sent to people in the Scandinavian country calling for revenge over the burnings of Islam's holy book in 2023.

According to officials in Stockholm, the cyberattack was carried out by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which hacked an SMS service and sent "some 15,000 text messages in Swedish" over the string of public burnings of the Quran that took place over several months in the summer of 2023.

Senior prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist said a preliminary investigation by Sweden's SAPO domestic security agency showed "it was the Iranian state via the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, IRGC, that carried out a data breach at a Swedish company that runs a major SMS service."

The Swedish company was not named. There was no immediate comment from Iranian authorities

on the accusations from Sweden.

In August 2023, Swedish media reported that a large number of people in Sweden had received text messages in Swedish calling for revenge against people who were burning the Quran, Ljungqvist said, adding that the sender of the messages was "a group calling itself the Anzu team."

Swedish broadcaster SVT published a photo of a text message, saying that "those who desecrated the Quran must have their work covered in ashes" and calling Swedes "demons."

The protests were held under the freedom of speech act, which is protected under the Swedish constitution. The rallies were approved by police. However, the incidents left Sweden torn between its commitment to free speech and its respect for religious minorities.

At the time, the Swedish government said it "strongly rejects the Islamophobic act committed by individuals in Sweden," adding that the desecrations did not reflect the country's stand.

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The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Eight bulls escape rodeo being held in parking lot

MA NORTH ATTLEBORO — This is no bull: First responders in a Massachusetts city had to exercise some impromptu roundup skills when eight bulls escaped from a rodeo being held in the parking lot of a mall on Sunday.

Video posted online captured the moment when the bulls escaped from the rodeo in North Attleboro. The animals charged through the crowded parking lot, knocked down fencing, bumped against a tent and rumbled toward busy U.S. Highway 1. They eventually headed for some nearby woods for short-lived freedom. No one was hurt during the breakout.

The North Attleboro Fire Department issued a warning: These rodeo bulls weren't playing around.

Seven of the eight were corralled by late Sunday afternoon, but the last one remained on the lam. The eighth bull was lassoed and led into a trailer on U.S. Highway 1 in North Attleboro on Monday night. The Festival Rodeo at the Emerald Square Mall was shut down, officials said.

How the bulls escaped was under investigation.

Lawmaker arrested on domestic violence charge

AL WINFIELD — An Alabama lawmaker was arrested on a domestic violence charge after his wife accused him of threatening to beat her.

Rep. Tracy Estes, 57, a Republican from Winfield, was jailed Friday night on a misdemeanor charge of third-degree domestic violence, news outlets reported. Marion County jail records online did not show him still in custody Saturday afternoon.

The lawmaker's wife, Christina Estes, said in a legal filing that her husband began cursing at her during an argument Friday evening at their home.

After she shut herself in a bedroom, she said, he spent two hours pounding in the door and threatening to beat her.

"This type of behavior has occurred numerous times since they have been married," the court record said.

Pilot killed in midair collision of two planes

CA LANCASTER — One pilot was killed and another pilot escaped without injuries when two single-engine airplanes collided in midair on Sunday in Southern California, authorities said.

The collision between a Nanchang CJ-6 and a Yakovlev Yak-52 occurred around 1 p.m. in Lancaster, a desert city about 65 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

One person on one of the small



SETH WENIG/AP

Getting a grip

Suhруд Kamat, 11, top, practices the traditional Indian sport of mallakhamb outside the Nassau Coliseum before an event with Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, in Uniondale, N.Y., on Sunday.

planes died, the LA County Fire Department said. Only the pilots were on board both aircraft, the FAA said.

It wasn't immediately clear which plane was carrying the victim who died.

The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board will investigate.

Man accused in shootings near homeless camps

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A man has been charged in shootings near Minneapolis homeless encampments that killed one man and injured another.

Anthony Jones, 36, was charged with one count of second-degree murder and one count of attempted second-degree murder, the Hennepin County Attorney's Office said in a news release.

Jones also is under investigation for another killing that happened the same day as the other shootings, the news release said.

Police used surveillance video to identify Jones as the person who fatally shot a man at point-blank range. Additional investigation connected him to the other "targeted" shootings in the same area of south Minneapolis, the news release said.

Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty said the shooting spree "does not appear to have been targeted at the broader unhoused community," but called the attacks "horrifying."

No election security after posts about yard signs

OH RAVENNA — A local Ohio elections board says the county sheriff's department will not be used for election security following a social media post by the sheriff saying people with Kamala Harris yard signs should have their addresses recorded so that immigrants can be sent to live with them if the Democratic vice president wins the November election.

In a statement on the Portage County Democrats' Facebook page, county board of elections chair Randi Clites said members voted 3-1 Friday to remove the sheriff's department from providing security during in-person absentee voting.

Clites cited public comments indicating "perceived intimidation by our sheriff against certain voters" and the need to "make sure every voter in Portage County feels safe casting their ballot for any candidate they choose."

Students protest against gun violence at meeting

GA ATLANTA — Weeks after four people died and nine people were injured in a school shooting northeast of Atlanta, a group of elementary school students carried signs into the Georgia Capitol as lawmakers discussed legislation that would incentivize safe gun storage.

About 20 students ranging from

5- to 12-years-old — joined by a few parents and teachers from an Atlanta private school — shuffled into a state Senate committee meeting to demand legislative action on gun violence.

"This is our future generation," 11-year old Autumn Humphries said to Senate Democrats in the room and Republicans who were watching remotely. "We are the next generation. You're acting like you don't care."

As the students walked out, committee Chairman Emanuel Jones, a Decatur Democrat, led the students in a chant: "No more violence! End gun violence!"

Motorcyclist killed after being hit by speeding car

AZ PHOENIX — A motorcyclist has died after being struck by a car traveling 140 mph by a suspected impaired driver on a freeway in Phoenix, authorities said Sunday.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety said the driver of the car was taken into custody. The names of the car driver and motorcyclist weren't immediately released.

DPS troopers said the car was observed going 140 mph — nearly twice the posted speed limit — on Interstate 10 around 1:30 a.m. Sunday. After crashing into the motorcycle rider, DPS officials said the car's driver kept going for another mile before the vehicle caught on fire.

They said the motorcyclist was

rushed to a hospital, where he later died.

Arizona Department of Transportation officials say the section of freeway where the crash occurred was closed for eight hours while authorities conducted their investigation.

Boxing training halted after recruit's death

MA NEW BRAINTREE —The Massachusetts State Police have suspended full-contact boxing training activities among recruits until further notice after a trainee died, a police spokesperson said.

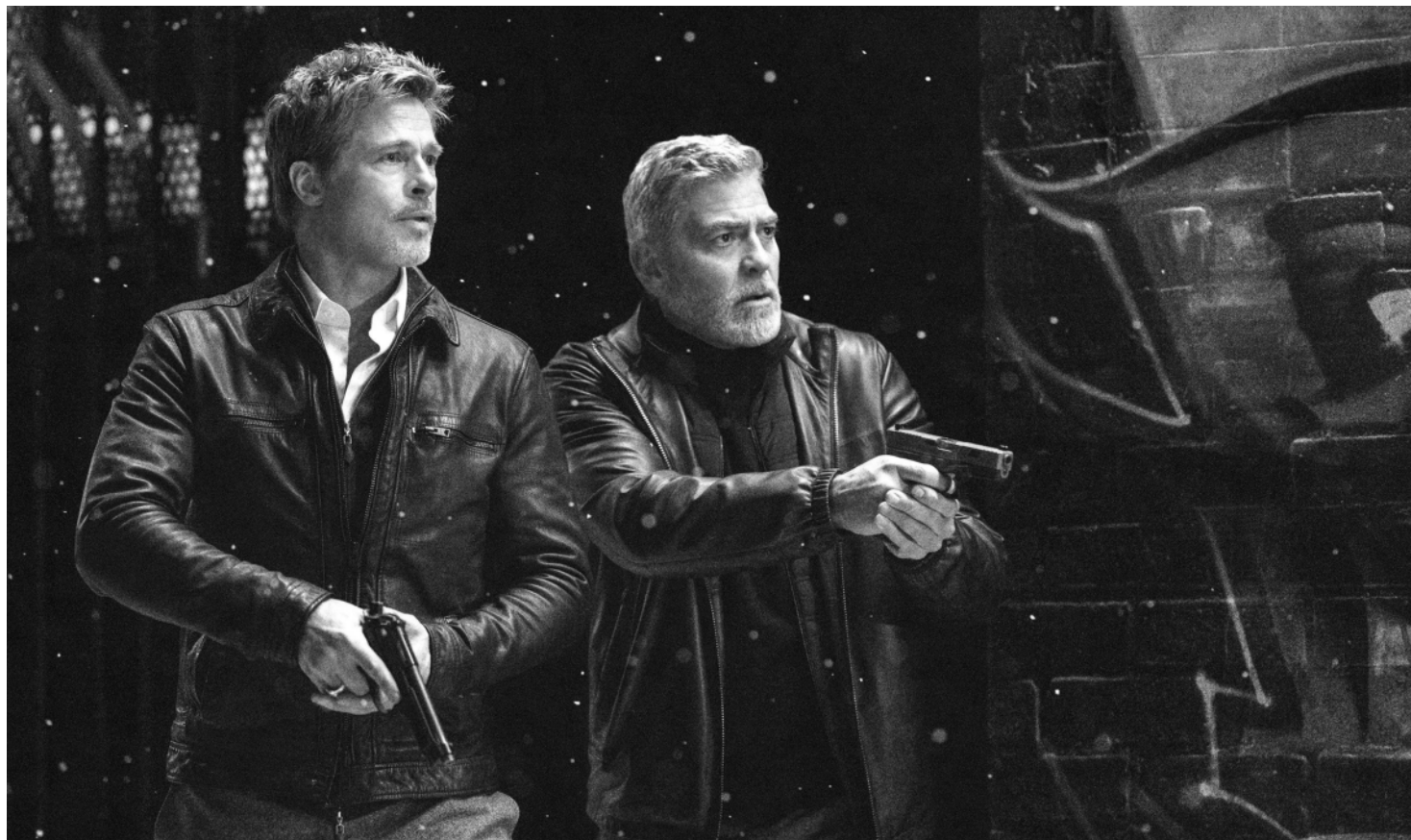
Enrique Delgado-Garcia, 25, of Worcester, died at a hospital on Sept. 13, a day after the exercise in the boxing ring at the Massachusetts State Police Academy in New Braintree, in Worcester County, about 80 miles west of Boston.

Delgado-Garcia was wearing boxing gloves and headgear during the exercise. The medical team determined he required urgent care and took him to the hospital, where he died. His manner and cause of death have not been released. Family members told reporters that he suffered broken teeth and a neck fracture.

"The Academy suspended full-contact boxing training activities between trainees until further notice," Tim McGuirk, a state police department spokesperson, said in a statement Sunday night.

From The Associated Press

FACES



APPLE TV+/AP

After a short theatrical run, "Wolfs," starring Brad Pitt, left, and George Clooney is coming to Apple TV+ on Friday.

New this week: Clooney and Pitt are together again, 'Will & Harper'

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

■ Hard as this may be to believe, George Clooney and Brad Pitt are good together. Yes, stop the presses and all that. But it's been a while since Clooney and Pitt, who first teamed up for "Ocean's 11," had a movie built around their easy charisma. "Wolfs," streaming Friday on Apple TV+, corrects that with a sleek New York caper about two fixers who have been hired for the same cleanup job. In my review of the film by writer-director Jon Watts ("Spider-Man: No Way Home"), I wrote that "Wolfs" is "designed to show you that they can still, without ever really breaking a sweat, get the job done."

■ Some Pixar fans have quibbled in the past when the digital animation studio has leaned too hard into sequels. But the box office for "Inside Out 2" is hard to refute. With nearly \$1.7 billion in ticket sales, it's the year's biggest box-office hit. On Wednesday, "Inside Out 2" arrives on Disney+ to make one of the most anticipated streaming debuts of the year. In it, Riley has grown up a couple years but entered a new chapter in life: puberty, bringing with it a number of new emotions.

■ Will Ferrell and Harper Steele became friends and collaborators at "Saturday Night Live," where Steele was head writer from 2004 to 2008. When Steele came out as transgender a few years ago, Ferrell, interested in reconnecting, proposed a road trip. In "Will & Harper," streaming Friday on Netflix, the two embark on a cross-coun-

try expedition full of revelations about what this changes and doesn't change in their relationship.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Music

■ Remember the first time you heard "Million Dollar Baby"? The rap record feels like it came out of nowhere — as so many TikTok smashes do — but continues to endure, moving from hit song of the spring to hit song of the summer to hit song of the fall and beyond. But now, fans of Tommy Richman will get to dive deeper into his musical abilities when he releases the full-length "Coyote" on Friday. Little is known about the 11-track release, but the lead singles "Whitney," a disco-funk electro-detour, and "Thought You Were the One" — a hook-heavy R&B ballad — suggest range.

■ Serj Tankian, frontman of the Grammy Award-winning Armenian-American nu-metal band System of a Down, will release a short solo EP, "Foundations," on Friday. The release maintains his band's abrasion but experiments with different forms of audial rebellion.

■ There is nothing predictable about the band Being Dead's sophomore album, "EELS," produced by Grammy-award winner John Congleton. Across 16 tracks that move from asymmetrical egg punk, Devoworship, a recording of a bus driver who has had enough, timeless, near-psychedelic harmonies and various other oddball sensibilities, Being Dead's organized chaos is future-seeking and familiar all at once.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Television

■ Ryan Murphy has a new series on FX called "Grotesquerie" premiering Wednes-

day. Niecy Nash stars as a detective who agrees to help a nun and reporter (Micaela Diamond) with a Catholic newspaper to investigate a series of gruesome murders. Super Bowl-winning Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce (otherwise known as Taylor Swift's boyfriend) a secret role in the show.

■ If "Grotesquerie" isn't your bag, there's another Ryan Murphy series making its debut this week. A medical drama called "Doctor Odyssey" premieres Thursday on ABC. Joshua Jackson plays a doctor on board a luxury cruise ship called the Odyssey. Don Johnson, Philippa Soo and Sean Teale also star. The show also boasts a number of guest stars including John Stamos, Kelsea Ballerini, Shania Twain and Chord Overstreet. A trailer for the show had nearly 78 million views within 48 hours, making it the most-watched trailer for a new broadcast TV show. Episodes also stream on Hulu.

■ One might assume a TV show called "Colin from Accounts" takes place in an office setting. Instead, it's a modern-day romantic comedy made in Australia. It's created by and co-stars real-life husband and wife Harriet Dyer and Patrick Brammel, who play two people who are brought together by an injured dog named Colin. All eight episodes of Season 2 debut Thursday on Paramount+.

■ "The Walking Dead" characters Daryl and Carol (Norman Reedus and Melissa McBride) make up one of the most popular platonic pairings on TV. The unlikely friends bond over similar pasts and share a deep trust. They next co-star in "The Walking Dead: Daryl Dixon - The Book of Carol," premiering Sunday on AMC and AMC+.

— Alicia Rancilio

Jane's Addiction singer seeking treatment after concert brawl, wife says

Jane's Addiction singer Perry Farrell is seeking medical treatment as he takes a moment "to reflect and to heal" after an on-stage brawl with Dave Navarro.

Farrell's wife, Ety Lau Farrell, said Sunday on Instagram that she and her husband are taking steps to move forward from the viral fight and that Farrell, 65, has scheduled appointments with a neurologist and an otolaryngologist. The latter specializes in diseases and conditions of the head and neck, according to the **Farrell** Mayo Clinic.



Farrell

"If you know and love Perry well, you know there's no need for me to address the other false narratives," Lau Farrell continued. "Our souls know."

Jane's Addiction abruptly called off the remainder of its reunion tour after an on-stage fight between Farrell and Navarro brought the "Jane Says" band's Sept. 13 show in Boston to an unexpected close. Farrell appeared to shove Navarro, and a subsequent fight was broken up by the stage crew, who pulled the musicians apart, according to video published by TMZ.

Despite tensions, Jane's Addiction released its latest single, "True Love," last week.

Other news

■ Jazz saxophone player and composer **Benny Golson** has died at age 95. Golson worked over his seven-decade musical career with Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, John Coltrane and other jazz luminaries. He built much of his reputation not as a performer but as the composer of standards such as "Killer Joe," "Along Came Betty" and "I Remember Clifford." He appeared as himself in the 2004 movie "The Terminal." In the movie, the main character played by Tom Hanks needs Golson's autograph.

■ Fans of Broadway, circle this date: This season's **Tony Awards** will take place on June 8 at its familiar home of Radio City Music Hall. Producers of the show announced the date and location Monday. For the past few years, the telecast has bounced around New York City.

■ Comedian **John Mulaney** and actor **Olivia Munn** now have a second child, a daughter named Méi June Mulaney. Munn said in an Instagram post Sunday that the girl was born via a surrogate on Sept. 19. Munn, 44, and Mulaney, 42, married in July. They also have a 2-year-old son named Malcolm together.

■ It's a three-peat for "**Beetlejuice Beetlejuice**." Studio estimates Sunday showed that the Tim Burton sequel topped the North American box office charts for the third straight weekend, with \$26 million in ticket sales. The Warner Bros. release has earned more than \$226 million domestically in total. This weekend it edged out the animated new release "Transformers One," which was second with \$25 million. Third place went to the James McAvoy horror "Speak No Evil," which came in at \$5.9 million in its second week for a total of \$21.5 million.

From wire reports

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As space czar, Harris never took flight

By GREG AUTRY
AND ROBERT S. WALKER
Special to *The Washington Post*

Vice President Kamala Harris has failed our nation in her role as America's space czar. Whether you care about space exploration or not, Harris' record as chair of the National Space Council offers a serious indictment of her leadership capabilities.

On Dec. 1, 2021, President Joe Biden issued an executive order directing the vice president to chair a National Space Council composed of Cabinet-level officials, backed by an advisory committee of space industry leaders. Biden's order echoed one issued by Donald Trump and public law going back to the Kennedy administration. The legally defined responsibilities of the council are to "coordinate the implementation of space policy and strategy" and to "synchronize the Nation's civil, commercial and national security space activities." The vice president is explicitly required to "serve as the President's principal advisor on national space policy and strategy."

These are electrifying times in space, and Harris was handed an opportunity to shine. The Trump administration, in which Greg served, left her a robust U.S. space program enjoying broad bipartisan support. NASA was leading a coalition of nations returning to the moon under the Artemis program. American companies had captured the lion's share of a rapidly expanding global space market. SpaceX was boldly returning Americans to space on U.S.-built rockets. Boeing, Blue Origin and others were preparing to fly.

Yet Harris has been notably disengaged from space. Under Trump, the Space Council conducted eight substantive public meetings. Harris scheduled only three, just fulfilling the annual requirement. In the most recent meeting, hastily convened just 10 days before the

end of 2023, Harris spoke for eight minutes and walked out, handing off her responsibilities as chair to her national security adviser, Phil Gordon.

The Trump administration led the development of six Space Policy Directives, addressing deep space exploration, space commerce regulation, space traffic, cybersecurity and nuclear power. It also established the United States Space Force. The Biden-Harris White House has issued a single Space Policy Directive, on GPS improvements.

NASA's return to the moon has slipped years behind schedule. Administrator Bill Nelson openly worries that China will beat us there. Two American astronauts are stuck on the International Space Station in an increasingly humiliating saga. The space station is scheduled to be de-orbited in 2030. Commercial LEO Destinations, nongovernmental (low Earth orbit) space stations that NASA is planning as replacements, will not be ready, leaving researchers fearing a "LEO gap." China's Tiangong station is expanding and attracting international partners. Harris has neither stepped in nor commented on our troubled human spaceflight program.

NASA's Science Mission Directorate has been particularly hard hit by the lack of White House attention. A newly parsimonious Congress has throttled NASA's budgets with continuing resolutions and flat top-line appropriations. To accommodate the expanding cost of Artemis, science spending has been trimmed, resulting in some very damaging choices. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory laid off 8% of its workforce in February. The agency's biggest scientific mission, Mars Sample Return, collapsed under budgetary pressure, and the agency is soliciting "new ideas" from industry. In July, a nearly complete lunar rover, VIPER, was canceled and NASA announced it will fly a "mass simula-

tor" (a dead weight chunk of lead) to the moon instead, as the lander and launch are already booked. Two American robotic moon landers failed this year.

Meanwhile, China is chalking up one lunar triumph after another, including working rovers and successful sample returns. Rather than stepping in with a space science rescue plan or even taking the opportunity to publicly admonish the Republican House of Representatives, our space czar has been nowhere to be seen.

Harris appears to engage on space only when it offers a good photo op. In 2021, the VP's team auditioned a group of child actors to sit for a cringey, scripted "chat" about space. Even when speaking to adults, her lectures fall flat. Her speech at Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif., informing our USSF guardians that "space is exciting" was widely seen as patronizing. And she was silent as Vladimir Putin's Russia prepared to orbit nuclear space weapons designed to attack U.S. commercial satellite constellations.

Homer Hickam, the esteemed author of "Rocket Boys" who served on the National Space Council's Users' Advisory Group during both the Trump-Pence and Biden-Harris White Houses, has noted that this team of high-level experts was never engaged by Harris and writes, "I didn't think VP Harris cared a thing about space."

We have heard the same story from concerned industry leaders, senior Space Force officers and former NASA leaders. As vice president, Kamala Harris had very few legally defined jobs, and she failed at this one.

Greg Autry served as White House liaison to NASA in the Trump administration and is the co-author of "Red Moon Rising: How America Will Beat China on the Final Frontier." Robert S. Walker, the CEO of MoonWalker Associates, is a Republican former congressman from Pennsylvania and served as chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee.

What if uncertainty and crisis are the norm?

By CARLOS SÁNCHEZ
Los Angeles Times

Whether the attempted insurrection, the pandemic, the two assassination attempts on Donald Trump, or something else, there has been enough craziness since 2020 to warrant social panic. We frequently utter phrases such as "We live in uncertain times," "We are going through a moment of crisis" or "This is not normal." But when are we not in times of uncertainty, crisis or abnormality?

We like to think that some secret formula can help us deal with turbulent times. Some call upon their faith to walk them through the crises of modern life; others take up yoga, meditate or meditate; some just give up in either monastic resignation or cynical hopelessness. Many of us, however, quietly panic.

We react this way because uncertainty and insecurity seem to persist, even though someone, at some point, convinced us that precarious times were temporary. I blame insurance commercials.

Whoever it was, we panic because we desperately want the uncertainty and crisis to end.

But it doesn't. It can't. The universe is built on tumultuousness and violence. Galaxies crash against one another, and black holes swallow stars whole. Here on Earth, humans find that as soon as one crisis is over, another one rolls in.

So what should we do? We can try harder to find the certainty and normalcy that once felt promised. Or we can stop trying to fix the crises and surrender to the chaos ("Let go and let God!" as some in Alcoholics Anonymous might say).

Another option is to change our mindset. To start, we should stop thinking uncertainty, crisis and insecurity are temporary.

I teach and write about Mexican philosophy, and a key insight from this tradition is that if anything is certain, it's uncertainty; that insecurity and crisis are "states of our being." Mexican philosophers call this state "accidentalidad" (accidentalidad), the notion being that the surety we're after is just an ideal that has never been and never will be achieved. In fact, for Mexican philosophers, accidentalidad describes a way of life for people who have never known anything but pain and suffering — a condition they call "catastrophismo" (catastrophismo).

In a way, catastrophismo describes us all, though some recognize it more clearly than others. "Our normality is our crisis," wrote philosopher Emilio Uranga, highlighting the notion that "normal" human experience knows little about stability, security and permanence. Life is unscripted and random. We've often been told otherwise, but usually in an attempt to control how we live or think. Uranga tells us that we must be distrustful of those narratives and exhibit a certain "untrustworthiness" (desconfianza) toward

those who claim "mastery over the accident."

Political platforms often make such claims: America will get back to normalcy if we adopt the principles of Project 2025; illegal immigration, excessive inflation and pandemics will go away if we elect Trump; the culture wars over gay marriage, gender identity and the teaching of U.S. history will disappear if we elect Kamala Harris. Voting for one party rather than the other, they promise, will make life stable, set things right and align us with God's will or natural selection in such a way that we will suffer less. But both conservative and liberal dreams are really unreachable ideals that exist only in our imaginations.

Better to remember that Mexican philosophers have it right: Uncertainty and crisis are our default. Times of surety and calm are the rare moments when we need to stock up on faith, philosophy, insight, wisdom and grace so that we can face the rest of life without panicking or jumping off political or existential cliffs.

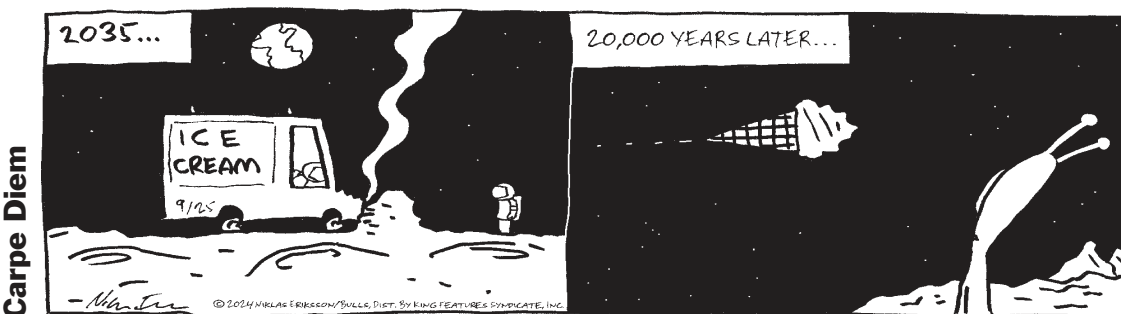
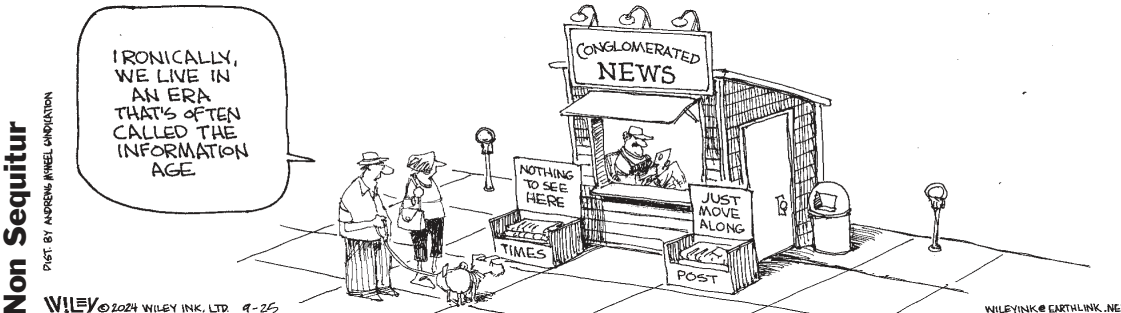
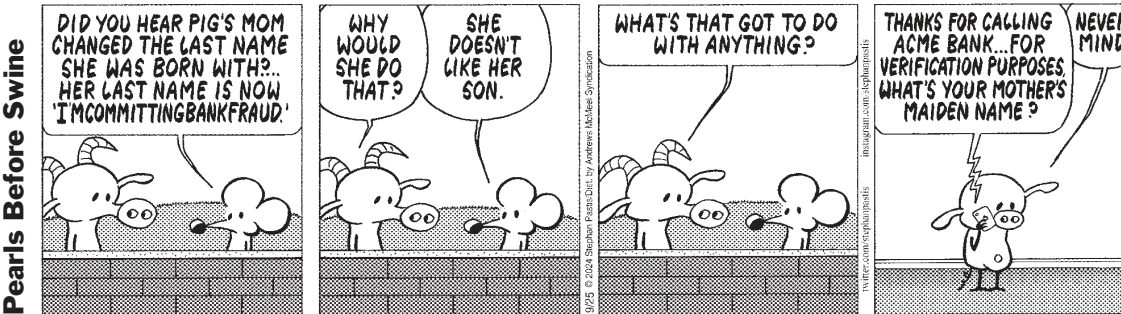
Let's take a lesson from these thinkers and own our accidentalidad, and refrain from lying to ourselves about certainties and cure-alls. We will be OK, but probably not because we've overcome crisis, uncertainty and insecurity themselves. It will have more to do with getting used to them.

Carlos Sánchez is a professor of philosophy at San José State University and the author of "Blooming in the Ruins: How Mexican Philosophy Can Guide Us Toward the Good Life."

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbered squares.

ACROSS

- 1 Columbo portrayer
5 'Mayday!'
8 Picnic invaders
12 Rose's lover
13 French article
14 Traditional tales
15 'Hush!'
17 Missing GI
18 Subway entrances
19 FedEx alternative
21 Drain, as strength
22 Goad
23 Scamper
26 Shower curtain holder
28 Conform
31 Gator's kin
33 Poetic contraction

- 55 Fair hirer, in ads
56 'The Lion King' lion
57 Pulls, as a camper
58 Roulette bet
59 Wild guess

- 11 Vend
16 Rip
20 Madrid Mrs.
23 TV pioneer
24 Coffee vessel
25 'Live and learn'
27 Brief drop
29 Expert
30 Cowboy moniker
32 Hurtles
34 Sushi wrap
37 LBJ's successor
39 Loading zone
42 Fall bloom
44 Property claims
45 'Hold on ...'
46 - Domini
48 Pesky insect
49 Spanish greeting
50 Clear the decks?
53 Garden tool

DOWN

- 1 Web pages for newbies
2 Border on
3 Caesar's 53
4 Falls (over)
5 Solar patch
6 Artist Yoko
7 Clinch
8 Stylish
9 Currently
10 'Star Trek' counselor

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Answer grid for the previous crossword puzzle.

9-25

CRYPTOQUIP

HAAEY BHG SYKPR IYGCKRCK
H RYX BCKB-DYOB OHV, SPD
DBYJ VYHEEJ ITR'D XHRD DT
CRGDHEE XCRITXG.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IT SEEMS AS THOUGH FASHION DESIGNERS HAVE A VERY NARROW FOCUS. THEY'RE ALWAYS CLOTHES-MINDED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals G

SCOREBOARD/AUTO RACING

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Schedule	
Thursday's game	
EAST	
Army (3-0) at Temple (1-3)	
Friday's games	
EAST	
Washington (3-1) at Rutgers (3-0)	
SOUTH	
Virginia Tech (2-2) at Miami (4-0)	
Saturday's games	
EAST	
W. Kentucky (3-1) at Boston College (3-1)	
Harvard (1-0) at Brown (1-0)	
Bucknell (2-2) at Lehigh (3-1)	
Dayton (2-1) at Marist (0-3)	
Buffalo (3-1) at Uconn (2-2)	
Holy Cross (1-3) at Syracuse (2-1)	
Columbia (1-0) at Georgetown (2-2)	
Frostburg St. (0-0) at Mercyhurst (1-3)	
Colgate (1-3) at Penn (0-1)	
Dartmouth (1-0) at Merrimack (1-3)	
Fordham (0-4) at Monmouth (NJ) (2-2)	
Yale (1-0) at Cornell (0-1)	
Howard (2-2) at Princeton (0-1)	
Sacred Heart (2-2) at Delaware (3-0)	
W. Michigan (1-2) at Marshall (1-2)	
Maine (2-2) at Albany (NY) (1-2)	
Morgan St. (2-2) at Stony Brook (3-1)	
LIU Brooklyn (0-4) at Villanova (3-1)	
Illinois (4-0) at Penn St. (3-0)	
SOUTH	
Navy (3-0) at UAB (1-2)	
N. Illinois (2-1) at NC State (2-2)	
South Florida (2-2) at Tulane (2-2)	
Kentucky (2-2) at Mississippi (4-0)	
Valparaiso (2-2) at Morehead St. (2-2)	
Ball St. (1-2) at James Madison (3-0)	
Mercer (4-0) at Wofford (2-1)	
ETSU (2-2) at The Citadel (2-2)	
S. Utah (1-3) at Austin Peay (1-3)	
Richmond (2-2) at Elon (1-3)	
Delaware St. (1-3) at Campbell (1-3)	
Robert Morris (2-2) at E. Kentucky (2-2)	
North Alabama (0-5) at West Georgia (1-2)	
Samford (1-2) at Furman (1-3)	
Alabama St. (1-2) at Bethune-Cookman (0-4)	
Norfolk St. (2-3) vs. NC Central (2-2) at Indianapolis	
Georgia Southern (2-2) at Georgia St. (2-1)	
Liberty (4-0) at Appalachian St. (2-2)	
Louisiana-Lafayette (2-1) at Wake Forest (1-2)	
Oklahoma (3-1) at Auburn (2-2)	
Colorado (3-1) at UCF (3-0)	
(1-3)	
UTSA (2-2) at East Carolina (2-2)	
North Carolina (3-1) at Duke (4-0)	
Wagner (2-2) at FAU (1-3)	
Hampton (3-1) at William & Mary (3-1)	
NC A&T (1-3) at SC State (1-2)	
Louisiana Tech (1-2) at FIU (1-3)	
Alabama A&M (2-2) at Florida A&M (2-2)	
Charleston Southern (1-2) at Tennessee St. (2-2)	
UT Martin (1-3) at Kennesaw St. (0-3)	
Davidson (2-1) at Presbyterian (2-2)	
Alcorn St. (1-3) at MVSU (0-4)	
Louisiana-Monroe (2-1) at Troy (1-3)	
Grambling St. (3-1) vs. Prairie View (1-3) at Dallas	
Portland St. (0-3) at Chattanooga (0-3)	
Stanford (2-1) at Clemson (2-1)	
Middle Tennessee (1-3) at Memphis (3-1)	
Georgia (3-0) at Alabama (3-0)	
South Alabama (2-2) at LSU (3-1)	
MIDWEST	
Maryland (3-1) at Indiana (4-0)	
Oklahoma St. (3-1) at Kansas St. (3-1)	
Nebraska (3-1) at Purdue (1-2)	
Minnesota (2-2) at Michigan (3-1)	
Va. Lynchburg (0-3) at Butler (3-0)	
San Diego (2-1) at Drake (1-1)	
Houston Christian (1-3) at Indiana St. (1-2)	
Murray St. (1-2) at North Dakota (3-1)	
S. Illinois (2-2) at South Dakota (2-1)	
Youngstown St. (1-3) at Missouri St. (2-2)	
Lindenwood (Mo.) (1-3) at E. Illinois (1-3)	
N. Dakota St. (3-1) at Illinois St. (3-1)	
Akron (1-3) at Ohio (2-2)	
San Diego St. (1-2) at Cent. Michigan (2-2)	
Louisville (3-0) at Notre Dame (3-1)	
Umass (1-3) at Miami (Ohio) (0-3)	
E. Michigan (3-1) at Kent St. (0-4)	
TCU (2-2) at Kansas (1-3)	
Northwestern St. (0-4) at SE Missouri (3-1)	
Old Dominion (0-3) at Bowling Green (1-2)	
Ohio St. (3-0) at Michigan St. (3-1)	
McKendree (0-0) at W. Illinois (0-3)	
SOUTHWEST	
BYU (4-0) at Baylor (2-2)	
Sam Houston St. (3-1) vs. Texas State (2-1) at Houston	
Texas A&M (3-1) vs. Arkansas (3-1) at Arlington, Texas	
Mississippi St. (1-3) at Texas (4-0)	
Charlotte (1-3) at Rice (1-3)	
Jackson St. (2-2) at Texas Southern (1-2)	
SE Louisiana (1-3) at Tarleton St. (3-1)	
Lamar (3-1) at Cent. Arkansas (3-1)	
Iowa St. (3-0) at Houston (1-3)	
Tulsa (2-2) at North Texas (3-1)	
Cincinnati (3-1) at Texas Tech (3-1)	
Florida St. (1-3) at SMU (3-1)	
FAR WEST	
Cal Poly (1-2) at N. Colorado (0-4)	
Fresno St. (3-1) at UNLV (3-0)	
Wisconsin (2-1) at Southern Cal (2-1)	
Sacramento St. (2-2) at N. Arizona (2-2)	
Montana St. (4-0) at Idaho St. (2-2)	
Air Force (1-2) at Wyoming (0-4)	
Montana (3-1) at E. Washington (1-3)	
New Mexico (0-4) at New Mexico St. (1-3)	
McNeese St. (3-2) at Weber St. (2-2)	
Abilene Christian (2-2) at Utah Tech (0-4)	
Idaho (3-1) at UC Davis (3-1)	
Washington St. (4-0) at Boise St. (2-1)	
Arizona (2-1) at Utah (4-0)	
Oregon (3-0) at UCLA (1-2)	

PRO SOCCER

MLS						
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Inter Miami CF	19	4	7	64	68	44
Cincinnati	17	8	5	56	52	39
Columbus	16	5	8	56	58	31
New York	10	6	14	44	47	39
Orlando City	12	11	7	43	50	45
Charlotte FC	11	11	8	41	36	33
NYCFC	11	11	8	41	43	43
Toronto FC	11	17	3	36	38	55
Philadelphia	9	12	9	36	57	47
CF Montréal	8	12	10	34	41	61
Atlanta	8	13	9	33	40	44
Nashville	8	13	9	33	31	46
D.C. United	8	13	9	33	44	61
Chicago	7	16	8	29	36	54
New England	8	17	4	28	32	60
WESTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LA Galaxy	17	7	7	58	63	46
Real Salt Lake	14	7	9	51	60	45
Colorado	15	10	5	50	58	50
LAFC	14	8	7	49	52	40
Houston	13	8	9	48	43	33
Seattle	13	9	8	47	45	34
Vancouver	13	9	7	46	49	40
Portland	12	10	8	44	63	53
Minnesota	12	12	6	42	50	48
FC Dallas	10	13	7	37	49	49
Austin FC	9	13	8	35	32	42
Sporting KC	8	16	7	31	49	58
St Louis City	6	11	13	31	43	57
San Jose	5	22	3	18	37	69

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

Saturday's games	
Los Angeles FC at Cincinnati	
Columbus at D.C. United	
Charlotte FC at Miami	
San Jose at CF Montréal	
Nashville at New England	
New York City FC at New York	
Atlanta at Philadelphia	
Real Salt Lake at Austin FC	
Toronto FC at Chicago	
Orlando City at FC Dallas	
Colorado at Minnesota	
Sporting Kansas City at St Louis City	
Portland at Vancouver	
Houston at Seattle	

Wednesday, Oct. 2	
CF Montréal at Atlanta	
Chicago at Charlotte FC	
Cincinnati at New York City FC	
Philadelphia at Orlando City	
New York at Toronto FC	
Miami at Columbus	
New England at Houston	
D.C. United at Nashville	
LA Galaxy at Colorado	
Minnesota at Real Salt Lake	
St Louis City at Los Angeles FC	
Austin FC at Portland	
FC Dallas at San Jose	
Seattle at Vancouver	

Saturday, Oct. 5	
Minnesota at Vancouver	
New York at Atlanta	
CF Montréal at Charlotte FC	
Orlando City at Cincinnati	
Philadelphia at Columbus	
D.C. United at New England	
Miami at Toronto FC	
Los Angeles FC at Sporting Kansas City	
Houston at St Louis City	
Seattle at Colorado	
Austin FC at LA Galaxy	
Real Salt Lake at San Jose	

NWSL						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Orlando	15	0	6	51	37	12
Washington	14	5	2	44	42	24
Gotham FC	13	4	4	43	26	16
Kansas City	12	3	6	42	46	28
North Carolina	10	9	2	32	28	23
Chicago	9	10	2	29	27	28
Portland	8	9	4	28	31	30
Louisville	6	8	7	25	30	29
Bay FC	8	12	1	25	25	33
Angel City	6	11	4	22	25	35
Seattle	5	11	5	20	23	35
San Diego	4	10	7	19	17	26
Houston	4	12	5	17	14	32
Utah Royals FC	4	14	3	15	14	34

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

Monday's game	
Portland 2, Angel City 2, tie	
Friday's game	
Washington at Angel City	
Saturday's games	
Gotham FC at Kansas City	
Louisville at Utah Royals FC	
Houston at Orlando	
Portland at San Diego	
Sunday's games	
Bay FC at Seattle	
North Carolina at Chicago	

TENNIS

Chengdu Open	
Monday	
At Chengdu Center	
Chengdu, China	
Purse: \$1,171,655	
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor	
Men's Singles	
Semifinals	
Lorenzo Musetti (1), Italy, def. Alibek Kachmazov, Russia, 6-4, 6-2.	
Juncheng Shang, China, def. Yannick Hanfmann, Germany, 6-4, 6-4.	
Men's Doubles	
Semifinals	
Yuki Bhambri, India, and Albano Olivetti (3), France, def. Ivan Dodig, Croatia, and Rafael Matos (2), Brazil, 6-3, 7-6 (9).	

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA playoffs	
(x-if necessary)	
First Round	
(Best-of-three)	
No. 1 New York 1, No. 8 Atlanta 0	
New York 83, Atlanta 69	
Tuesday: at New York	
x-Thursday: at Atlanta	
No. 2 Minnesota 1, No. 7 Phoenix 0	
Minnesota 102, Phoenix 95	
Wednesday: at Minnesota	
x-Friday: at Phoenix	
No. 3 Connecticut 1, No. 6 Indiana 0	
Connecticut 93, Indiana 69	
Wednesday: at Connecticut	
x-Friday: at Indiana	
No. 4 Las Vegas 1, No. 5 Seattle 0	
Las Vegas 78, Seattle 67	
Tuesday: at Las Vegas	
x-Thursday: at Seattle	

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL	
Major League Baseball	
American League	
BOSTON RED SOX — Placed RHP Kenley Jansen on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Chase Shugart from Worcester (IL).	
CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Claimed RHP Ron Marinaccio off waivers from the New York Yankees and optioned him to Birmingham (SL).	
SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated RHP Gregory Santos from the 15-day IL. Optioned LHP Jhonathan Diaz to spring training camp.	
TAMPA BAY RAYS — Reinstated 2B Richie Palacios from the 10-day IL. Optioned 1B Austin Shenton to FCL Rays.	
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Optioned 2B Orelvis Martinez to the Florida Complex League.	

National League	
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Sent 2B Luis Guillorme outright to Reno (PCL).	
CHICAGO CUBS — Recalled RHPs Gavin Hollowell and Caleb Kilian from Iowa (IL). Placed RHP Jorge Lopez on the 15-day IL, retroactive to Sept. 20. Optioned RHP Trey Wingenter to the Arizona Complex League. Claimed RHP Enoli Paredes off waivers from Milwaukee.	
BASKETBALL	
National Basketball Association	
ATLANTA HAWKS — Waived F Joey Hauser	
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES — Waived G Derrick Rose.	
TORONTO RAPTORS — Waived C Dylan Disu.	
UTAH JAZZ — Waived F Keshawn Justice.	

FOOTBALL	
National Football League	
CINCINNATI BENGALS — Elevated DT Dominique Davis from the practice squad to the active roster.	
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Elevated TE Josiah Deguara and CB Christian Braswell from the practice squad to the active roster.	
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Signed WR Jalen Reagor to the practice squad.	
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed T Jalen McKenzie to the practice squad.	
WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Elevated CB Bobby Price and DR Andre Jones Jr. from the practice squad to the active roster.	

HOCKEY	
National Hockey League	
COLORADO AVALANCHE — Signed F Logan O'Connor to a six-year contract extension.	
NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Signed F Hiroki Gojsic to a three-year, entry-level contract.	
SAN JOSE SHARKS — Acquired G Yaroslav Askarov, C Nolan Burke and a 2025 3rd-round draft pick from Nashville in exchange for G Magnus Chrona, C David Edstrom and a 2025 1st-round pick. Released G Aaron Dell.	
VEGAS KNIGHTS — Signed D Viliam Kmeč to a three-year, entry-level contract.	

SOCCER	
National Women's Soccer League	
WASHINGTON SPIRIT — Loaned D Waniya Hudson to Dallas Trinity FC (USL Super League).	

AP SPORTLIGHT

Sept. 25
1920 — Molly Bjurstedt Mallory wins her fifth title in six years with a two-set victory over Marion Zinderstein in the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association championships.
1962 — Sonny Liston knocks out Floyd Patterson at 2:06 of the first round at Comiskey Park in Chicago to win the world heavyweight title.

PRO HOCKEY

NHL preseason							
EASTERN CONFERENCE							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Buffalo	2	2	0	0	4	13	4
Florida	2	2	0	0	4	9	4
Montreal	1	1	0	0	2	5	0
Ottawa	1	1	0	0	2	6	0
Toronto	1	0	0	1	1	5	6
Detroit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tampa Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boston	1	0	1	0	0	2	3

SPORTS BRIEFS/COLLEGE



RICHARD VOGEL/AP

Attorney Ben Crump, right, congratulates former USC football player Reggie Bush on his returned Heisman Trophy during a news conference at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on April 25 in Los Angeles.

BRIEFLY

Bush sues, seeking compensation from football career 2 decades ago

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Former Southern California football star Reggie Bush says he is suing his school, the NCAA and the Pac-12 in a bid to recoup money made on his name, image and likeness during his career with the Trojans two decades ago.

In a brief news release from Bush's attorneys Monday announcing the filing, the Heisman Trophy-winning tailback's representatives claim he should be paid "to address and rectify ongoing injustices stemming from the exploitation of Reggie Bush's name, image, and likeness during his tenure as a USC football player." The release revealed no specifics about the intended suit.

"This case is not just about seeking justice for Reggie Bush," attorney Evan Selik said in a statement. "It's about setting a precedent for the fair treatment of all college athletes. Our goal is to rectify this injustice and pave the way for a system where athletes are rightfully recognized, compensated and treated fairly for their contributions."

Bush forfeited his Heisman in 2010 after USC was hit with massive sanctions partly related to his dealings with two aspiring sports marketers. The Heisman Trust restored the honor earlier this year and returned the trophy to Bush, citing fundamental changes in the structure of college athletics over the past 14 years.

Chargers safety James suspended for head hits

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Los Angeles Chargers safety Derwin James was suspended one game without pay by the NFL on Mon-

day for repeated violations of rules intended to protect players' health and safety.

James has five unnecessary roughness penalties in his last 18 games, the most in the league by a defensive player. All five have involved blows to the head of an opponent with his shoulder or helmet.

Jon Runyan, the league's vice president of football operations, cited the league's ban on lowering the head and initiating contact with the helmet. Runyan pointed to James' targeting of Steelers tight end Pat Freiermuth during the third quarter of Sunday's 20-10 loss at Pittsburgh as the last straw.

49ers RB McCaffrey will see specialist in Germany

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — San Francisco 49ers All-Pro running back Christian McCaffrey went to Germany to consult with a specialist about his Achilles tendinitis.

Coach Kyle Shanahan confirmed that McCaffrey made the trip in hopes of resolving an issue that has bothered him since early in training camp and has forced him onto injured reserve to start the season.

McCaffrey missed four weeks of practice before returning on a limited basis before the season opener Sept. 9 against the Jets. He went on injured reserve on Sept. 14, two days after experiencing pain in the Achilles tendon following a practice. He is eligible to return for a Week 6 game at Seattle but there is no indication that he is close to being able to play.

Freshman Hawkins taking over at QB for Oklahoma

NORMAN, Okla. — Oklahoma

coach Brent Venables has named true freshman Michael Hawkins Jr. the Sooners' new starting quarterback over Jackson Arnold for Saturday's game at Auburn.

Arnold turned the ball over three times in the first half of a 25-15 loss to Tennessee on Saturday night. The former five-star recruit completed 7 of 16 passes for 54 yards with an interception, and had five carries for minus-21 yards with two lost fumbles before being replaced. His mistakes were the key reason Tennessee led 19-3 at halftime.

Hawkins sparked the Sooners in the second half, leading Venables to declare the position open. He completed 11 of 18 passes for 132 yards and a touchdown, and ran for 22 yards as Oklahoma outscored the Volunteers 12-6 in the second half.

Blackmon to retire after 14 seasons with Rockies

DENVER — Four-time All-Star Charlie Blackmon will retire at the end of the season after spending his entire major-league career with the Colorado Rockies.

The outfielder known for his bushy beard announced his decision Monday. The Rockies will celebrate Blackmon throughout their final homestand this week and hold a tribute for him before the season finale Sunday against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Blackmon spent 14 seasons with the team and is the franchise's all-time leader in triples (67). He's also second in games played (1,618), runs scored (991), hits (1,797), doubles (333), extra-base hits (626) and total bases (2,942). He won an NL batting title in 2017 with a .331 average.

Sources: Pac-12 adding Utah State

League also looking at Gonzaga for 2026

By RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

The Pac-12 is adding Utah State as its seventh member and is in discussions with basketball powerhouse Gonzaga to join the rebuilding conference in 2026, multiple people with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Monday.

In a whirlwind day of maneuvering by three leagues, Utah State and UNLV of the Mountain West became prime targets for the Pac-12 after a group of American Athletic Conference schools decided to stay put, following a pitch to join the rebuilding Conference of Champions.

Utah State, based in Logan, accepted the Pac-12's invitation, according to two people, but UNLV's decision was uncertain Monday night as Mountain West Commissioner Gloria Nevarez worked to keep the conference's remaining schools together.

The Mountain West received commitments from Air Force and San Jose State earlier in the day, according to two other people with knowledge of that conference's situation, but it was unclear if anything was binding if the rest of the remaining members were not on board. Air Force had been drawing interest from the AAC to join Army and Navy in that conference.

The other Mountain West schools include New Mexico, Wyoming, Nevada and Hawaii for football only.

The people all spoke on condition of anonymity because both Pac-12's and Mountain West's strategy and internal discussions were not being made public.

The Pac-12's latest expansion addition, which was not immediately confirmed by the league, came hours after four American Athletic Conference schools announced they remained committed to the AAC.

Memphis, Tulane, South Florida and UTSA released a statement that made no mention of the Pac-12, but several people with knowledge of those talks told AP the conference had targeted those schools as potential members.

"While we acknowledge receiving interest in our institutions from other conferences, we firmly believe that it is in our individual and collective best interests to uphold our commitment to each other," the schools said. "Together, we will continue to modernize the conference, elevate the student-athlete experience, achieve championship-winning successes and build the future."

The Pac-12 needed at least two

more members in all sports to reach the eight required to be a recognized conference with access to NCAA championships and the College Football Playoff in 2026.

With Utah State on board, that's down to one, and the conference is exploring options beyond UNLV.

Zags

Adding Gonzaga would give the Pac-12 one of the best men's basketball programs in the country. The Bulldogs have thrived in the West Coast Conference, reaching the NCAA Tournament every year it has been played since 1998, with two Final Four appearances and eight seasons of at least 30 victories. Gonzaga does not have a football program.

The school has in the past talked to the Big East about conference affiliation, and the Big 12 has discussed potentially adding Gonzaga to its strong men's basketball lineup, as it did with UConn earlier this year.

The Zags have also become a perennial tournament team in women's basketball.

Adding Gonzaga would leave the Pac-12 in need of another football-playing member for CFP purposes.

Money matters

One person with knowledge of the discussions between the Pac-12 and AAC schools said the conference's pitch included a projected \$12 million to \$15 million annual media-rights distribution to each school. The schools were also presented with options to join solely in football and basketball to alleviate travel costs associated with other sports programs making long trips.

All the Pac-12 schools are in the Mountain and Pacific time zones. The Pac-12 was targeting new members in the Central time zone as a way to increase value for possible television partners.

Leaving the AAC would have been costly for the schools. The conference's bylaws require a 27-month notification for departing schools and a \$10 million exit fee.

The Pac-12 and its four newest members are already on the hook for about \$110 million in exit fees and penalties to the Mountain West, a potential windfall for that conference to share with schools that choose to stay or join.

Pac-12 Commissioner Teresa Gould has declined to detail how that cost will be shared by the incoming schools and conference, which is sitting on about \$250 million in revenue the previous iteration of the league was in line to receive this year and next.

NFL

Daniels dazzles to beat Bengals

By MITCH STACY
Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Jayden Daniels stood in the pocket against an all-out blitz, took a hit from Bengals safety Geno Stone and launched a perfect ball toward Terry McLaurin in the corner of the end zone. McLaurin hauled it in and kept both feet in bounds while being tackled.

In his third NFL game and first in prime time, Daniels couldn't miss.

The No. 2 overall draft pick threw for two touchdowns and ran for a score in a remarkably efficient performance, and the Commanders stunned Joe Burrow and the Cincinnati Bengals 38-33 on Monday night.

"He's a real cool customer, and he's got a real poise about him," Washington coach Dan Quinn said of his quarterback.

Daniels finished 21-for-23 for 254 yards, setting an NFL rookie record for completion percentage at 91.3%. The Commanders (2-1) scored on every possession except for kneel-downs at the end of each half and have not punted or turned the ball over in their last two games.

"That's crazy," Daniels said of the record. He said he couldn't re-

member being that efficient in his passing at any level.

Neither Washington nor Cincinnati punted or had a turnover, the first time that's happened in a game in the Super Bowl era.

Burrow threw for a season-best 324 yards and three scores, but the Bengals (0-3) simply couldn't keep up. Cincinnati is off to its worst start since dropping its first 11 games on the way to a 2-14 finish in 2019.

Daniels' first career touchdown pass was a 1-yard toss to eligible tackle Trent Scott to start the second half, the second straight game in which the Bengals gave up a TD to a lineman.

"They were all discombobulated on defense," Daniels said. "We got a sneaky one."

The Commanders were clinging to a 31-26 lead when Daniels connected with McLaurin from 27 yards out with 2:10 remaining for the game-sealing score.

"I put in the work," said Daniels, last year's Heisman Trophy winner at LSU. "What's done in the dark will always come to light. I just know that I prepare for these moments week in and week out. I just have to go out there and play football and execute."

In the first half, Washington got



EMILIE CHINN/AP

Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels celebrates throwing a touchdown pass against the Cincinnati Bengals on Monday.

rushing touchdowns from Brian Robinson Jr., Austin Ekeler and Daniels.

McLaurin had four receptions for 100 yards.

The Bengals couldn't reach the end zone on three first-half drives, with Evan McPherson kicking two field goals and missing another.

Meanwhile, Washington didn't have a drive that fell short of the end zone until early in the fourth quarter, when Austin Seibert kicked a 42-yard field goal to make it 31-20.

Cincinnati got within five points on Burrow's second TD pass to Ja'Marr Chase, but the 2-point conversion failed.

Daniels then led a drive that ate

up 7½ minutes and ended with the toss to McLaurin, which had a completion probability of 10.3%, according to the NFL's Next Gen Stats.

Cincinnati scored on a 1-yard run by Zack Moss to cut the deficit to 38-33 with 40 seconds left, but McPherson's onside kick was unsuccessful.

Chase had six receptions for 118 yards and two TDs for the Bengals.

"I knew that would be a difficult football team," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. "They scored on every possession last week, and they scored on every possession this week. It was a dangerous team. They were ready for us. They dictated the flow of the game."

Allen throws 4 TD passes as Bills rout Jags

By JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Any concerns Josh Allen had about how the Bills would perform following a 10-day break were eased during a 10-play opening drive that ended with James Cook scoring on a 6-yard touchdown run.

Buffalo kept on scoring. Allen threw four touchdown passes and the Bills scored TDs on each of their five first-half drives in a 47-10 win over a misfiring Trevor Lawrence and the unraveling Jacksonville Jaguars on Monday night.

"It feels good, I'll tell you that," said Allen, whose 11 games with four TD passes set a team record, surpassing Hall of Famer Jim Kelly.

"I think this could have easily been a game where we had 10 days off and let up on the gas. But didn't sense that from our guys. A lot of urgency throughout the week," he said of a team that hadn't played since a 31-10 rout of Miami on Sept. 12. "We didn't win it today. We won it in the last 10 days."

Allen went 22-for-28 for 247 yards in the first 30 minutes alone, with completions to nine receivers. He only attempted two passes after halftime, finishing 23-for-30 for 263 yards before Mitchell Trubisky relieved him.

And he spread the wealth, completing touchdown passes to Dalton Kincaid, Keon Coleman, Khalil Shakir and Ty Johnson.

"Freak of nature, all those things," Shakir said of Allen, whose 230 touchdowns (passing,



ADRIAN KRAUS/AP

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen threw four touchdown passes in the first half of a 47-10 victory Monday over the Jacksonville Jaguars.

rushing and receiving) are one short of matching Patrick Mahomes for most by a player in his first seven NFL seasons.

Buffalo's defense limited Jacksonville to 70 yards, five first downs and a field goal in five first-half possessions. The game was essentially over when Allen completed a 16-yard TD pass to Johnson 19 seconds before halftime.

Safety Damar Hamlin contributed to the rout with his first career interception. He easily picked off Lawrence's overthrown pass intended for rookie Brian Thomas Jr. Five plays later, Allen completed a 27-yard TD pass to

Shakir, who caught the ball at the 22 and broke two tackles running up the right sideline.

Hamlin's interception came about 21 months after he went into cardiac arrest and had to be resuscitated on the field in a Monday night game at Cincinnati.

"We all know my last game and how that game went," said Hamlin, a starter after spending last season as a backup. "So to be able to come all the way back from that, and have a special moment, it's all God."

The four-time defending AFC East champions are off to their first 3-0 start since 2020 and third since coach Sean McDermott took over in 2017. They have topped 30 points in each game.

The Jaguars are in free fall. They last opened 0-3 in 2021 under coach Urban Meyer, who was fired before the end of the season.

And if things couldn't go any worse for the Jaguars, mechanical issues led to their flight being delayed out of Buffalo, the team announced.

Jacksonville's latest defeat comes a week after Lawrence expressed his frustrations by saying "We suck right now" following an 18-13 loss to Cleveland.

On Monday, it was coach Doug Pederson's turn to question his team.

"It's really shocking. Very disappointed. You hate to say it, but the reality is we're not very good right now," Pederson said. "I need everybody to coach and play better. Let's leave it at that."

Scoreboard

American Conference

East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	3	0	0	1.000	112	48
N.Y. Jets	2	1	0	.667	67	52
Miami	1	2	0	.333	33	72
New England	1	2	0	.333	39	57
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	2	1	0	.667	55	74
Indianapolis	1	2	0	.333	58	61
Jacksonville	0	3	0	.000	40	85
Tennessee	0	3	0	.000	48	78
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	3	0	0	1.000	51	26
Baltimore	1	2	0	.333	71	78
Cleveland	1	2	0	.333	50	67
Cincinnati	0	3	0	.000	68	80
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	3	0	0	1.000	75	62
L.A. Chargers	2	1	0	.667	58	33
Denver	1	2	0	.333	52	46
Las Vegas	1	2	0	.333	58	81

National Conference

East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	2	1	0	.667	70	63
Washington	2	1	0	.667	79	88
Dallas	1	2	0	.333	77	89
N.Y. Giants	1	2	0	.333	45	64
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New Orleans	2	1	0	.667	103	44
Tampa Bay	2	1	0	.667	64	62
Atlanta	1	2	0	.333	49	61
Carolina	1	2	0	.333	49	95
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Minnesota	3	0	0	1.000	85	30
Detroit	2	1	0	.667	62	53
Green Bay	2	1	0	.667	75	58
Chicago	1	2	0	.333	53	57
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	3	0	0	1.000	73	43
Arizona	1	2	0	.333	82	64
L.A. Rams	1	2	0	.333	57	91
San Francisco	1	2	0	.333	73	69

Thursday's game

N.Y. Jets 24, New England 3

Sunday's games

Denver 26, Tampa Bay 7
Green Bay 30, Tennessee 14
Indianapolis 21, Chicago 16
Minnesota 34, Houston 7
N.Y. Giants 21, Cleveland 15
Philadelphia 15, New Orleans 12
Pittsburgh 20, L.A. Chargers 10
Carolina 36, Las Vegas 22
Seattle 24, Miami 3
Baltimore 28, Dallas 25
Detroit 20, Arizona 13
L.A. Rams 27, San Francisco 24
Kansas City 22, Atlanta 17

Monday's games

Buffalo 47, Jacksonville 10
Washington 38, Cincinnati 33

Thursday, Sept. 26

Dallas at N.Y. Giants

Sunday, Sept. 29

Cincinnati at Carolina
Denver at N.Y. Jets
Jacksonville at Houston
L.A. Rams at Chicago
Minnesota at Green Bay
New Orleans at Atlanta
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay
Pittsburgh at Indianapolis
New England at San Francisco
Washington at Arizona
Cleveland at Las Vegas
Kansas City at L.A. Chargers
Buffalo at Baltimore

Monday, Sept. 30

Tennessee at Miami
Seattle at Detroit

Thursday, Oct. 3

Tampa Bay at Atlanta

Sunday, Oct. 6

N.Y. Jets at Minnesota
Baltimore at Cincinnati
Buffalo at Houston
Carolina at Chicago
Cleveland at Washington
Indianapolis at Jacksonville
Miami at New England
Arizona at San Francisco
Las Vegas at Denver
Green Bay at L.A. Rams
N.Y. Giants at Seattle
Dallas at Pittsburgh

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Georgia head coach Kirby Smart, left, spent more than a decade on the staff of former Alabama head coach Nick Saban before leaving after the 2015 season to lead the Bulldogs, his alma mater.

Mentor-turned-rival Saban no longer issue for Smart

By PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Kirby Smart no longer has to worry about his mentor-turned-nemesis in Tuscaloosa. Somewhere, deep in his gut, the Georgia coach might be a bit relieved that Nick Saban is now wearing a mic at the broadcast table rather than a headset on the sideline.

Just don't expect Smart to come right out and say it.

Deflecting several versions of the same question — essentially, what's it going to be like to face an Alabama team that's not coached by Saban? — Smart kept the focus squarely on the two powerhouse programs that will meet Saturday night on Saban Field at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

"No, I don't expect it to be strange," Smart said Monday. "That's just the normal course of progression."

Still, there's no getting around the major issue hanging over a rivalry that largely has charted the course of the Southeastern Conference for nearly a decade.

Saban is not a part of it anymore — other than his duties as an analyst for ESPN's "College GameDay", which will be on hand in Tuscaloosa as the No. 2 Bulldogs (3-0, 1-0 SEC) face the No. 4 Crimson Tide (3-0, 0-0).

Smart said he's glad Saban — who retired in January after winning a record seven national titles, six of them in charge of the Alabama program — seems to be cher-

ishing life after coaching.

"I'm thrilled that he gets an opportunity to do what he wants to do and be with who he wants to be with within his family and enjoy that," Smart said. "I'm really happy he's still part of college football because he makes college football better."

These two coaches — one now retired, the other in the prime of his career — will be linked forever. Smart was on Saban's staff for more than a decade, soaking up every bit of wisdom he could glean from perhaps the greatest coach in college football history.

After the 2015 season, Smart departed Tuscaloosa to take over the good-but-not-quite-great program at his alma mater, quickly pushing the Bulldogs to that next level.

You know, the spot at the top of the conference held by Saban's Crimson Tide.

Georgia captured the SEC crown in Smart's second season, only to be defeated in the national title game by Alabama in an overtime thriller.

Saban beat his former assistant three more times — twice with the league championship on the line, another time in a regular season — before Smart finally broke through with a 33-18 victory in the national championship game at the end of the 2021 season.

That was the first of two straight national titles for Smart's Bulldogs, moving them to the pinnacle of college football's hierarchy, but it was Saban who delivered the fi-

nal salvo to his former pupil.

After Georgia breezed through the 2023 regular season at 12-0 and seemed poised for an unprecedented third straight title in the poll era, Alabama pulled off a 27-24 upset in the SEC championship game — a result that knocked the Dawgs out of the four-team playoff.

It was a loss that still stings between the hedges.

"We definitely have a chip on our shoulder," receiver Arian Smith conceded.

Smart has certainly carved his own dynastic path at Georgia, but he never quite escaped Saban's shadow. His record against his former boss was 1-5. The Bulldogs have only two losses in their last 51 games — both of them coming to Alabama.

For sure, Saban's presence still looms over this rivalry. There may be a different guy on the Alabama sideline Saturday night, but many of those taking the field will have ties to the previous coach.

"Well, he recruited a lot of them, and they're good players," Smart said of Saban, before catching himself and quickly shifting the focus to the game at hand and not who will — or won't — be coaching in it.

"Any time you go against a really good team that's a powerhouse in college football, it's a challenge," Smart said, firmly back on message. "I really look at it like this is a hell of an opportunity for our kids, our program, on a national stage."

QB Ewers practices but questionable for Texas' SEC opener

By JIM VERTUNO
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers practiced Monday but remains questionable to play with an abdomen strain when the No. 1 Longhorns face Mississippi State in their Southeastern Conference opener, coach Steve Sarkisian said.

Ewers sat out last weekend's 51-3 win over Louisiana-Monroe, and Arch Manning threw two touchdowns and two interceptions in earning his first career victory as a starter.

And if Ewers can't play Saturday against Mississippi State (1-3, 0-1), it will be Manning leading the Longhorns (4-0) into the program's first game in the SEC.

Ewers was injured in the first half of Texas' win over UTSA. He at first laid on the field, then walked slowly to the sideline medical tent before leaving the field. He was on the sideline with the Longhorns on Saturday but was not in uniform.

The injury came on a long pass and was not caused by contact, Sarkisian has said.

"He (Ewers) has got to do enough to show me he can play. Can he execute the game plan?" Sarkisian said. "I want to make sure he's healthy enough to play at a high level."

Ewers "keeps getting incrementally better," Sarkisian said.

Sarkisian said he trusts Ewers to be honest with him about any pain he feels when deciding whether to play this week or continue to rest.

"The beauty of it for Quinn and I is our time together (and) him having to come back from injuries

previously," Sarkisian said.

Ewers has missed two games each of the previous two seasons with sternum and shoulder injuries. After playing Mississippi State, Texas will have a week off before facing rival Oklahoma in the annual matchup in Dallas.

Ewers may be anxious to get back on the field. He opted to return to Texas this season instead of entering the NFL draft last spring, and has garnered early-season attention as a Heisman Trophy contender after Texas dominated Michigan in Week 2.

"Him being honest with me, is in his best interest, in our best interest," Sarkisian said. "I'll do everything in my power to put him in the best position to be successful if he plays. And if he doesn't, what does that look like moving forward?"

Manning, a second-year freshman, has shown he is more than capable of leading Texas if Ewers remains out another week. He dazzled with five touchdown passes and a 67-yard touchdown run against UTSA.

Manning's game against Louisiana-Monroe was an uneven follow-up with two interceptions and some missed throws in a night with a 52% completion rate. Several other passes were thrown into tight coverage.

After the game, Manning rated his first career start as a "C-plus."

Sarkisian has noted that when Ewers is healthy enough to return, he remains the starter.

"Arch believes in his ability and he's going to take his (deep) shots. And we've reaped the benefits of it," Sarkisian said. "But he'll learn some of those explosive plays are check downs."



ERIC GAY/AP

Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers stands on the sideline in street clothes after he was hurt in a game against UTSA in Austin, Texas, on Sept. 14.

MLB

Phils win 1st NL East title since 2011

BY DAN GELSTON
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Trea Turner shouted for his booze-soaked Phillies teammates to clear a path — the clouds of smoke formed from puffs of his celebratory cigar certainly opened a hole — as he rode into the clubhouse on a platform truck also stacked with cases of beer.

Hoodie up, goggles on, Turner jumped and splashed into the swirl of beer and bubbly that sopped the clubhouse floor, the All-Star shortstop ready to crash the bash that had circled him.

The Phillies are used to the party, though this one came with a twist — for the first time in 13 years, they are headed to the postseason as NL East champs.

Kyle Schwarber and J.T. Realmuto went deep. Phillies fans went wild. And pitcher Aaron Nola provided a taste of just how great it would feel for the entire franchise if Philly went all the way.

The Phillies won the NL East for the first time since 2011, clinching the division title with a 6-2 victory over the Chicago Cubs on Monday night.

“That was our main goal in spring training, to win the division and get that first-round bye,” slugger Bryce Harper said. “Do all the things we can to kind of set us up for the postseason. The division was the first thing.”

The Phillies had rolled tarp pinned above clubhouse locker stalls before the game, a familiar protective sight for the bottle-popping ahead for a team that’s made the playoffs each of the past three seasons under manager Rob Thomson.

They went wild moments after Carlos Estévez retired Michael



MATT SLOCUM/AP

The Phillies, including Bryce Harper, center, celebrate after beating the Chicago Cubs to clinch the NL East on Monday in Philadelphia. The division title is the Phillies’ first in 13 years.

Busch on a fly ball to end the game. Phillies players swarmed each other in excitement on the infield. The Phillie Phanatic stormed the celebration waving a 2024 flag as fans stood and filmed it all.

“We know there’s a really big picture ahead of us,” Schwarber said before the game. “Winning the division is a big thing. If we go out there and do our thing tonight, it’s going to be well deserved. It’s not an easy division to win. It’s never been an easy division to win. It definitely will be a cool thing.”

Oh, it was cool in Philly for an announced sellout crowd of 42,386, with temperatures in the 60s — a sneak peek of October weather.

That suits this squad just fine.

With a postseason berth already clinched last week, Schwarber, Harper, Turner & Co. earned the franchise’s 12th division championship — and have their sights set on the top seed in the National League playoffs.

The Phillies (93-64) hold the No. 2 spot just behind the Los Angeles Dodgers (93-63) and would earn a first-round bye should the standings hold.

“The biggest things for me, really, are winning the division and getting the bye,” Thomson said. “If we get home field throughout, that’s a bonus. But I won’t put our players in danger to get there.”

It seemed fitting the 31-year-old Nola was on the mound for the

clincher. He was a first-round draft pick by the Phillies in 2014, debuted the next year and has been with them his entire career. He’s been one of baseball’s most dependable pitchers — a valuable commodity with the modern stress on big league bullpens.

Nola only briefly tested the free-agent market last offseason before signing a \$172 million, seven-year deal to stick with the Phillies.

His reward — another postseason opportunity to bring home a World Series title now 16 years in the making.

“I think that says a lot about our club. We stayed hungry after the losses in the World Series and the CS last year,” Nola said. “We hope we can keep that going.”

Scoreboard

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
z-New York	92	64	.590	—
Baltimore	86	70	.551	6
Boston	79	78	.503	13½
Tampa Bay	78	78	.500	14
Toronto	73	84	.465	19½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Cleveland	90	67	.573	—
Detroit	82	74	.526	7½
Kansas City	82	74	.526	7½
Minnesota	81	75	.519	8½
Chicago	36	120	.231	53½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	85	72	.541	—
Seattle	81	76	.516	4
Texas	74	82	.474	10½
Oakland	67	89	.429	17½
Los Angeles	63	93	.404	21½

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Philadelphia	93	64	.592	—
New York	87	69	.558	5½
Atlanta	85	71	.545	7½
Washington	69	87	.442	23½
Miami	57	99	.365	35½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Milwaukee	89	67	.571	—
Chicago	80	77	.510	9½
St. Louis	79	77	.506	10
Cincinnati	76	81	.484	13½
Pittsburgh	73	83	.468	16
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Los Angeles	93	63	.596	—
San Diego	90	66	.577	3
Arizona	87	70	.554	6½
San Francisco	78	79	.497	15½
Colorado	60	96	.385	33

x-clinched division
z-clinched playoff berth

Monday’s games

Philadelphia 6, Chicago Cubs 2
San Francisco 6, Arizona 3
Seattle 6, Houston 1
Boston 4, Toronto 1

Tuesday’s games

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

Wednesday’s games

Seattle (Kirby 13-11) at Houston (Kikuchi 9-9)
Chicago Cubs (Assad 7-5) at Philadelphia (Sánchez 11-9)
Cincinnati (Aguilar 2-1) at Cleveland (Cantillo 2-3)
Tampa Bay (Littell 8-9) at Detroit (Montero 6-6)
Milwaukee (Peralta 11-8) at Pittsburgh (Ortiz 6-6)
Kansas City (TBD) at Washington (Herz 4-8)
Baltimore (Eflin 10-9) at N.Y. Yankees (Cortes 9-10)
Boston (Fitts 0-0) at Toronto (Gausman 13-11)
N.Y. Mets (Peterson 9-3) at Atlanta (Sale 18-3)
L.A. Angels (Suarez 1-2) at Chicago White Sox (Martin 0-5)
Miami (Cabrera 4-8) at Minnesota (Woods Richardson 5-5)
St. Louis (Fedde 8-9) at Colorado (Gomber 5-11)
San Francisco (Black 1-4) at Arizona (Gallen 13-6)
Texas (Bradford 6-3) at Oakland (Basso 1-0)
San Diego (Cease 14-11) at L.A. Dodgers (Flaherty 13-7)

Thursday’s games

Milwaukee at Pittsburgh
Kansas City at Washington
Tampa Bay at Detroit
L.A. Angels at Chicago White Sox
St. Louis at Colorado
Texas at Oakland
Baltimore at N.Y. Yankees
N.Y. Mets at Atlanta
Miami at Minnesota
San Diego at L.A. Dodgers

ROUNDUP

D-backs lose more ground in playoff race

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Matt Chapman hit an inside-the-park homer, Casey Schmitt and Michael Conforto both added solo shots and the San Francisco Giants continued to be a problem for teams with postseason aspirations, beating Arizona 6-3 on Monday night.

The Diamondbacks (87-70) lost more ground in the National League playoff race as they try to claim one of three wild cards. They’re in sole possession of the final wild card, 1½ games ahead of the Atlanta Braves (85-71). The San Diego Padres (90-66) and New York Mets (87-69) are in the first two spots.

The Mets and Braves play each other in a crucial three-game series that began Tuesday in Atlanta. “I don’t think there’s any press-

ing,” D-backs center fielder Jake McCarthy said. “We’ve had our foot on the gas pedal the whole season, so just chalk it up to baseball. We’re going to bounce back tomorrow.”

San Francisco is out of the playoff race, but has played extremely well the past week against teams that are in contention. The Giants have a 6-1 record against the Baltimore Orioles, Kansas City Royals and Diamondbacks.

It was another frustrating loss for Arizona, which coughed up an 8-0 lead on Sunday and fell to the Milwaukee Brewers 10-9.

“Today, we got beat,” D-backs manager Torey Lovullo said. “Their pitcher was making quality pitches, we weren’t able to generate the offense we normally have and we got beat.”

Mariners 6, Astros 1: Bryce Miller threw seven shutout innings and Julio Rodríguez had three hits and two RBIs to help visiting Seattle to a win over Houston that prevented it from clinching the AL West title.

The Astros entered needing only a victory over the second-place Mariners to secure their fourth straight division crown.

Instead, they struggled against Miller (12-8), managing just two singles while playing without injured slugger Yordan Alvarez.

Seattle has won four of five to move within 1½ games of the final American League wild-card spot in a crowded race that also includes Detroit, Kansas City and Minnesota.

Red Sox 4, Blue Jays 1: Tanner Houck pitched five strong innings,

Wilyer Abreu reached base three times and Boston extended its winning streak to three games with a victory over Toronto.

The Red Sox opened their final road trip — a three-game set in Toronto — by improving to 4-0 in Canada this season.

Abreu walked and scored on Vaughn Grissom’s sacrifice fly in the second, hit an RBI double in the third, and singled in the fifth, joining Jarren Duran as the only Boston players with multiple hits.

Houck (9-10) carried a perfect game into the fifth inning before walking Addison Barger with two outs. Ernie Clement followed with a single, but the 28-year-old right-hander got Jonatan Clase to fly out. Houck threw just 57 pitches, 36 strikes, in his first winning start since July 11 against Oakland.

MLB

Showdown: Rotations adjusted prior to series

FROM PAGE 24

“I already feel like I’m playing postseason games,” closer Raisel Iglesias said. “We just need to remain patient and play our game.”

Both teams made rotation adjustments to line up their pitching for the series.

New York right-hander Luis Severino (11-6, 3.79 ERA) started the opener against rookie Spencer Schwellenbach (7-7, 3.61), who dominated the Mets in a 4-0 win July 27.

Atlanta ace Chris Sale (18-3, 2.38), the NL Cy Young Award favorite, goes in the second game against fellow lefty David Peterson (9-3, 3.08). And then a streaking Sean Manaea (12-5, 3.29) faces Braves stalwart Max Fried (10-10, 3.42), another matchup of southpaws.

In a questionable move, the Mets decided to skip veteran lefty Jose Quintana (10-9, 3.74) in favor of Severino and Peterson. Quintana has allowed one earned run over 32 innings in his last five outings, winning the past four.

Adding to the intrigue is the uncertain status of Francisco Lindor. A contender for NL MVP, the star shortstop has played only one inning over the past nine games because of back pain.

But the Mets just completed a 6-1 homestand without him, thanks in no small part to some valuable contributions from 22-year-old substitute Luisangel Acuña — the younger brother of Braves slugger Ronald Acuña Jr., the reigning NL MVP.

Called up from the minors on Sept. 14, Luisangel Acuña is batting .379 with three homers, six RBIs, six runs, six extra-base hits and a 1.228 OPS in his first nine major league games.

Ronald Acuña Jr. won’t play in the series after sustaining a season-ending knee injury in May. But he told Luisangel in a congratulatory text message last week that he’s looking forward to swapping jerseys in Atlanta.

“I’ll be honest, I wasn’t expect-

ing to be here a couple weeks ago,” Luisangel Acuña said through a translator. “He’s excited for me to get there, but at the end of the day we want to win.”

The rivalry between these franchises runs deep for decades, with Hall of Famers such as Mike Piazza, Chipper Jones and Bobby Cox at the center of some memorable moments.

But it has mostly been one-sided.

New York challenged the Braves atop the NL East a few times during their record run of 14 straight division titles from 1991-2005, only to fall short.

Piazza and the Mets pushed the 1999 NLCS back to Atlanta on Robin Ventura’s grand slam-single at Shea Stadium, then watched Kenny Rogers walk home the series-winning run in Game 6.

And so, for a team chasing its first World Series championship since 1986, finally upending the Braves when it matters most would signal to afflicted Mets fans the promise of coming success under new president of baseball operations David Stearns and impressive rookie manager Carlos Mendoza.

Another flop? Maybe same old Mets — fair or not.

Following this series, Atlanta finishes the season with three games at home against Kansas City, caught up in a close race of its own for an American League wild card.

Edwin Díaz and the resurgent Mets visit NL Central champion Milwaukee, which might be locked into the No. 3 playoff seed by then.

Since falling 11 games under .500 on May 29, New York has the best record in the majors at 65-36.

“Our goal is to get back here and be playing playoff baseball in October. There’s a lot of hoops to get through in order to do that,” outfielder Brandon Nimmo said.

AP baseball writer Ronald Blum and AP freelance writers Jerry Beach and Santos Perez contributed to this report.



DERIK HAMILTON/AP

The Mets’ Luisangel Acuña is the younger brother of the Braves’ Ronald Acuña, the reigning National League MVP.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Padres starting pitcher Dylan Cease, acquired in a trade with the Chicago White Sox just before the season started, is 14-11 this season with a 3.42 ERA. He threw his first career no-hitter on July 25.

After escaping White Sox, Cease on cusp of playoffs

By **BERNIE WILSON**
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — If there really are baseball gods, they certainly smiled on Dylan Cease when he was traded from the lowly Chicago White Sox to the San Diego Padres during spring training.

The gravity of escaping the South Side for Southern California was never more apparent than late Sunday afternoon at Petco Park.

In the visiting clubhouse, Cease’s old teammates somberly packed for the flight home after tying the modern-era record of 120 losses.

Down the hall, the vibes were flowing after a comeback win in front of another raucous sellout crowd brought Cease and the Padres to the cusp of a postseason berth.

“We’re fighting for the playoffs and beyond. I love this team so I’m just happy to be here,” Cease said.

With their magic number down to one, Cease and the Padres could be celebrating a postseason berth as early as Tuesday night at Dodger Stadium, when they opened a huge three-game series against their biggest rivals.

The Padres, who have 90 wins for the first time since 2010, own a three-game lead over Arizona for the NL’s first wild card. But they also have a shot at winning the NL West for the first time since 2006. They trail Shohei Ohtani and the Dodgers by three games, with six to go. The Padres hold the tiebreaker against the Dodgers with a 7-3 head-to-head record.

Cease (14-11, 3.42 ERA) will start Wednesday night.

Wild card

AMERICAN LEAGUE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	86	70	.551	+4
Detroit	82	74	.526	—
Kansas City	82	74	.526	—
Minnesota	81	75	.519	1
Seattle	81	76	.516	1½
Boston	79	78	.503	3½
Tampa Bay	78	78	.500	4

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Diego	90	66	.577	+3½
New York	87	69	.558	+½
Arizona	87	70	.554	—
Atlanta	85	71	.545	1½

Clinching a playoff spot will be the latest memorable moment for Cease this season. After being obtained on March 13 for four players, he had to scramble to find his passport and pack so he could join the Padres in Seoul, South Korea, where they played a season-opening, two-game series against the Dodgers.

On July 25, he threw his first career no-hitter in a 3-0 win at Washington to join Joe Musgrove as the only Padres pitchers to achieve the feat. They are more than just no-no bros. Cease wasn’t sleeping well in his apartment in a noisy downtown neighborhood so Musgrove invited him to stay in his guest house in an outlying neighborhood.

“It’s as much fun as I’ve ever had playing baseball,” said Cease, who also called the Padres the most well-rounded team he’s ever been on. “I think we’re all feeling optimistic. The resilience on this team has been amazing to watch. It’s just in general very fun to be part of.”

Cease reached the playoffs with the White Sox in 2020 and 2021. But they went 81-81 in 2022 before losing 101 games last year.

“It’s much more pleasant to win. And I know that sounds obvious, but you know, it is definitely taxing to lose that much,” Cease said. “It just seeps into everything. So to be on a team where we’re playing well and in contention, we all have a lot of energy every game. It’s great. It really is. I’m very fortunate to be here.”

The Padres are at close to full strength heading toward October and would love to win their first World Series title to honor Peter Seidler, the owner who died Nov. 14 at age 63.

Yu Darvish and Musgrove are back in the rotation after long layoffs. Slugger Manny Machado has bounced back from a slow start following offseason elbow surgery. Fernando Tatis Jr. and his swagger are back after a two-month injury layoff. Center fielder Jackson Merrill is making a strong push for NL Rookie of the Year.

Cease has been one of the few constants all season. The 28-year-old right-hander leads the squad with 32 starts, 184⅓ innings pitched and 220 strikeouts.

In his only postseason start, he lasted just 1⅓ innings in a 12-6 win against Houston in the 2021 AL Division Series.

“I didn’t control the adrenaline,” he said. “Definitely I didn’t capitalize on that moment as well as I would have liked to. It’s a next level of intensity and pressure and all that. I’m glad I experienced that then and hopefully that helps me out.”

SPORTS



Efficient performance

Rookie QB Daniels finishes 21-for-23 as Commanders top Bengals » **NFL, Page 20**



DERIK HAMILTON, ABOVE, AND JOHN McDONNELL, RIGHT/AP

Slugger Pete Alonso, above, and the New York Mets are battling catcher Sean Murphy, right, and the Atlanta Braves for a wild-card berth. The two teams face off in a crucial three-game series this week.

MLB

Showdown

Mets, Braves meet in Atlanta with playoff dreams at stake

By **MIKE FITZPATRICK**
Associated Press

All summer long, one massive series kept looming on the schedule.

Three games between the Mets and Braves in Atlanta during the final week of the season. With the NL East rivals locked in a heated wild-card race, surely it would come down to their head-to-head matchup.

And here we are.

“We knew it a couple of weeks ago: That series was probably going to help decide this thing. We know what we’re up against and we know what we have to do,” Atlanta catcher Sean Murphy said. “It just comes down to us. If we win, we’re in.”

Indeed, if the banged-up Braves are going to earn a seventh straight playoff berth, they’ll need a big performance at home.

And if the surprising Mets are going to finish this postseason push, they can do it by toppling a familiar nemesis.

On the line at Truist Park, nothing less than legacies — and a chance to play in October.

“I’m stoked for the opportunity,” said New York slugger Pete Alonso, set to become a free agent after the World Series.

With six regular-season games remaining, both teams were off Monday heading into their series

opener Tuesday night. New York (87-69) is a half-game ahead of Arizona (87-70) for the second of three National League wild cards, while the Braves (85-71) trail the Diamondbacks by 1½ games for the last playoff spot.

The Mets and Braves have split 10 meetings this year, so the winner of their three-game set holds the season-series tiebreaker if they finish with the same record.

New York knows two wins in Atlanta would clinch a playoff appearance. But a sweep by the Braves puts them in the driver’s seat going into the last weekend of the season.

It’s reminiscent of two years ago, when the Mets arrived in Atlanta for the penultimate series of the season leading the NL East by one game over the Braves. Atlanta swept their three-game set, securing a tiebreaker that decided the division title days later when both clubs finished 101-61 en route to early playoff exits.

It was the fifth of six consecutive NL East crowns for the Braves, a streak that ended last Friday when they were eliminated from a division race won Monday night by Philadelphia. But they still control their own wild-card fate, despite a barrage of injuries to All-Star players that has hindered them all year.

SEE SHOWDOWN ON PAGE 23



Phillies clinch first NL East title since 2011 » **MLB, Page 22**

