WASHINGTON — As the House prepares to bring the impeachment charge against Donald Trump to the Senate for trial, a growing number of Republican senators say they are opposed to the proceeding, dimming the chances that former president will be convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol.

House Democrats planned to carry the sole impeachment charge of “incitement of insurrection” across the Capitol late Monday evening, a rare and ceremonial walk to the Senate by the prosecutors who will argue their case. They are hoping that strong Republican denunciations of Trump after the Jan. 6 riot will translate into a conviction and a separate vote to bar Trump from holding office again.

But instead, GOP passions appear to have cooled since the insurrection. Now that Trump’s presidency is over, Republican Trump impeachment heading to Senate

GOP appears poised to oppose House charge

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As the House prepares to bring the impeachment charge against Donald Trump to the Senate for trial, a growing number of Republican senators say they are opposed to the proceeding, dimming the chances that former president will be convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol.

“I think the trial is stupid.”

Sen. Marco Rubio
R-Fla.

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President Donald Trump speaks at a rally in front of the White House on Jan. 6 in Washington. The Senate is set to receive the House of Representatives’ impeachment charge of “incitement of insurrection” following the riot at the U.S. Capitol.

SEE SENATE ON PAGE 8

US moves to stop German taxation of troops’ income

By John VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. government has intervened to try to stop German finance offices from imposing income taxes on American forces in the country, a practice the military says violates a long-standing international treaty.

The Pentagon, along with State and Treasury departments, have put the U.S. Embassy in Berlin in charge of leading efforts to resolve the issue, which has caused financial devastation for some military families who have been hit with six-figure bills by local tax authorities.

“You can’t do this,” said Col. Joe Scrocca, U.S. Army Europe and Africa spokesman.

The problem came to light last year when Stars and Stripes investigated aggressive tactics used to force troops and military civilians to pay German income tax, despite a clause in the Status of Forces Agreement stating that they are exempt.

“The aim of this engagement, and any necessary follow-up engagements, is to secure the appropriate tax exemptions for U.S. personnel covered under the SOFA and its supplementary agreements,” former Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller wrote in a Jan. 7 letter to Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Pa.

SEE INCOME ON PAGE 4
DuPont, Chemours reach ‘forever chemicals’ deal

Associated Press
DOVER, Del. — The DuPont Co. and its spinoff business Chemours have agreed to resolve legal disputes over environmental liabilities for pollution related to manufactured chemicals associated with an increased risk of cancer and other health problems.

The binding memorandum of understanding comes just over a month after Delaware’s Supreme Court upheld the dismissal of a lawsuit alleging that DuPont mass-produced Teflon, and have also been used in firefighting foam. They sometimes are referred to as “forever chemicals” because of their longevity in the environment.

The memorandum resolves legal disputes originating from the spinoff and establishes a cost-sharing arrangement and escrow account for potential future legacy PFAS liabilities arising out of pre-July 1, 2015, conduct.

DuPont, Chemours and Corteva, an independent public company that was previously the agricultural division of DowDuPont, also have agreed to resolve about 95 pending cases, as well as other unfilled matters, in multidistrict PFOA litigation in Ohio.

The chemicals at issue are PFOA, which was used in the production of Teflon, and have also been used in firefighting foam. They sometimes are referred to as “forever chemicals” because of their longevity in the environment.

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Taliban prisoners released in peace deal get arrested

By Phillip Walter Wellman
Stars and Stripes
KABUL, Afghanistan — Hundreds of Taliban prisoners released under last year’s U.S.-Taliban peace deal struck last February, was a precursor for the ongoing peace talks between the insurgents and the Afghan government.

On Saturday, the Biden administration announced Friday that it planned to review the deal and determine whether the Taliban are living up to their promises.

There are currently 2,500 American troops in the country, the lowest figure since the first months of the war nearly two decades ago, and down from roughly 13,000 this time last year.

The Kabul government — since 1996, Voice of America — has been arrested hundreds of Taliban prisoners released last year in exchange for 1,000 Afghan security force personnel captured by the guerrillas. The prisoner exchange, which was a part of the U.S.-Taliban deal struck last February, was a precursor for the ongoing peace talks between the insurgents and the Afghan government.

The Kabul government — which did not participate in talks leading up to the agreement — was initially hesitant to free the prisoners, but eventually bowed to pressure from Washington. Many in Afghanistan criticized the move, saying it could worsen the security situation.

Intensified combat in southern Afghanistan is a direct result of the prisoners being released, Afghan army Chief of Staff Gen. Yasin Zia said Sunday.

Mohib, who attended a security meeting, did not specify how many former prisoners besides those rearrested are believed to have rejoined the insurgency. All of the released prisoners signed a pledge that they would not fight again.

Taliban officials insist none of the former detainees have return to combat and rejected the claim that 600 had been recaptured. Only about 40 of the men are back in government custody and most of those were seized during raids on their homes and are innocent, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

The insurgents have continued to conduct attacks across Afghanistan despite the agreement with the United States, the start of peace talks with the government in September and repeated calls for a cease-fire from Washington and Kabul.

The relentless violence has led to doubts voiced by U.S. and Afghan government officials that the guerrillas aren’t serious about peace. All signs suggested the group is preparing to intensify attacks in the spring, when the traditional fighting season starts and just weeks before all international forces may pull out of the country, Mohib said.

Under the U.S.-Taliban deal, foreign forces could withdraw from Afghanistan by May if the Taliban live up to vague counterterrorism promises.

“The Taliban does not want peace. Our intelligence … shows that the Taliban is preparing to fight. They think that they will win militarily,” Mohib said. “The obligation is on us to become fully prepared.”

The Biden administration announced Friday that it plans to review the deal and determine whether the Taliban are living up to their promises.

Chinese fighters, bombers test Taiwan’s air defense

By Matthew M. Burke
Stars and Stripes
Chinese warplanes flew into Taiwan’s air defense identification zone Sunday, according to the island’s military news agency.

The aircraft traveled southeast, away from the Chinese mainland, before turning around and flying along virtually the same flight path, according to maps released online by Taiwan’s air force.

The incident came one day after China flew eight H-6K nuclear-capable bombers, a Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft and four fighters through the same area, the news agency said.

Fifteen Chinese aircraft, including 12 fighters, two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft and a technical reconnaissance plane, entered Taiwan’s southwest air defense identification zone Sunday, the island’s Military News Agenc reported that day. They passed between Taiwan’s southern shores and the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands in the South China Sea, according to the report.

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Chinese lawmakers believe China is trying to discourage the new U.S. president from supporting the island, Reuters reported Saturday.

“It’s sending a message to the Ministry of National Defense.”

China urges Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic and economic pressure against Taiwan, and instead engage in meaningful dialogue with Taiwan’s democratically elected representatives.

Price vowed to stand with Taiwan and to even deepen ties.

“We will continue to assist Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability,” he said.

Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sunday thanked Price for his statements via Twitter.

“We’re committed to our partnership with the United States, the ministry account said.

Naval SEAL sentenced to 10 years in prison in Green Beret hazing death

The Virginian-Pilot
NORFOLK, Va. — A Navy SEAL convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the hazing death of an Army Green Beret in 2017 was sentenced this weekend to 10 years in prison.

SEAL Team 6 member Tony E. DeDolph was also demoted from chief petty officer to seaman and will be dishonorably discharged. He must forfeit pay.

DeDolph pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter earlier this month after admitting that he applied the chokehold that killed Army Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar while trying to haze him in 2017 in Mali, West Africa.

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Two others previously convicted in the case, former Navy Chief Special Operator Adam Matthews and former Marine Staff Sgt. Kevin Maxwell Jr., were sentenced to one year and four years confinement, respectively. Both are also receiving bad conduct discharges.

Marine Gunnery Sgt. Mario Madera-Rodriguez has also been charged in Melgar’s death A trial is set for later this year.

DeDolph intends to appeal the sentence, according to his attorney, Philip Stackhouse.

DeDolph pleaded guilty as part of a pretrial agreement in which the Navy dropped charges of felony murder and burglary. Under the agreement, he faced a maximum of 22 1/2 years in prison.

In addition to the manslaughter charge, he pleaded guilty to hazing, conspiracy and obstruction of justice. Officials said he cut an incision in Melgar’s neck normally used to open an emergency airway in order to hide injuries from the chokehold.

The chokehold DeDolph applied involves placing the front of a victim’s neck in the crook of one arm, while pressing with the other on the back of the neck. He told his court-martial that he had safely performed the hold many times in training.

DeDolph said he and the other three men broke into Melgar’s room intending to haze him.
Biden ends military transgender ban

By CORI DICKSTEIN
and CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes
WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Monday ended the Pentagon's ban on transgender men and women joining the military, fulfilling a campaign promise to undo one of President Donald Trump’s signature Pentagons.

Biden issued an executive order Monday that allows all qualified Americans to serve in the military, regardless of their gender identity.

"President Biden believes that all gender identity should not be a bar to military service, and that America’s strength is found in its diversity,” according to a White House statement. “Allowing all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform is better for the military and better for the country because an inclusive force is a more effective force. Simply put, it’s the right thing to do and is in our national interest.”

The order directs the defense secretary and the Homeland Security secretary to implement it and make certain all regulations and policies follow the new executive order.

It also immediately stops involuntarily separations, discharges, and denials of enlistment or continuation of service due to gender identity, according to the statement. The order also starts a process to find and examine records of personnel who were kicked out based on their gender identity and correct their military records.

An initial report is to be submitted to Biden within 60 days on the progress of implementing the new directives and policy, according to the statement.

The policy change was expected to essentially revert the Pentagon back to its 2016 policy, which opened the military to transgender men and women near the end of former President Barack Obama’s administration. Biden, who backed that policy at that time, had pledged last year as a candidate to go back to its 2016 policy.

“I fully support the President’s direction that all transgender individuals who wish to serve in the United States military and can meet all medical and moral standards shall be able to do so openly and free from discrimination,” he said.

Recruits might be able to serve in their self-identified gender when they meet the standards to join the military and all medically necessary transition related care allowed by law will be available to service members, according to the statement.

It was not immediately clear Monday how long the Pentagon would need before it would start accepting new transgender service members. Experts said last summer that the Pentagon could reverse the policy in just 30 days.

The ban’s end could result in a rush to recruiting offices throughout the country for transgender men and women who have long sought to serve, said Nicolas Talbott, a transgender man who was among the first military hopefuls to file a lawsuit against Trump and the federal government to end the policy.

“We are all very excited we are very eager,” Talbott said last week.

Talbott plans to re-enter ROTC training, which he was forced to leave in 2019 after the ban was implemented and hopes to serve as an officer in the Air Force intelligence officer.

"I’m thrilled and relieved that I and other transgender Americans can now be evaluated solely on our ability to meet military standards. I look forward to becoming the best service member I can be," Talbott said in a statement after the ban was lifted.

The Pentagon's ban on transgender men and women enlisting in the military went into effect in April 2019, nearly two years after Trump’s surprise July 2017 Twitter announcement that he would no longer allow transgender persons to serve in the military “in any capacity.”

That announcement, which caught the Pentagon, including all the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, off guard, resulted months later in the Defense Department policy — known as the “Matts plan” — that permitted Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who crafted it, to implement his plan.

Talbott said in a statement after the ban’s reversal that he is more interested in social engineering than safeguarding the health and well-being of American service members, he said in a statement.

The Pentagon under Trump also so labeled needed health care for transgender men and women too costly. The Pentagon said last year that it spent about $8 million on health care for transgender service members between 2016 and 2019 from its about $30 billion annual budget.

It remains unclear precisely how many service members on active duty identify as transgender. A 2016 Defense Department survey, which was anonymous, found about 9,000 service member identified themselves as transgender men or women, but slightly more than 1,000 between 2016 and 2019 took the steps to openly serve in the preferred gender, officials said.

Gay and transgender advocates are hopeful that the policy can be reverted very quickly. Aaron Belkin, director of the Palm Center, a research institute that studies LGBTQ inclusion in the military, has said the Mattis plan left the groundwork for the Pentagon to completely end its ban within one month.

Income: DOD employees in Germany targeted by tax collectors

FROM PAGE 1

“We believe that some German tax authorities have adopted an incorrect interpretation of the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which contributed to the improper taxation of some U.S. personnel,” Miller wrote.

At the center of the problem is the claim by some German authorities that all service members, including dependents, are void if a person is in Germany for reasons other than just their military job.

Being married to a German, extending tours, owning property or sending children to German schools are among the factors that have been used by German officials to build tax liability cases.

To avoid taxes, a person must prove “a willingness to return” to the U.S. even though tax authorities may claim the person is in Germany in an off-base capacity.

Military families who have been ensnared by German tax collectors have complained that they were given little or no guidance to file a lawsuit against the federal government to end the policy.

"There’s nothing in there that is clear. We just have to agree on the language of the SOFA that supports the ban," Scrocca said.

In a meeting the following Tuesday, Biden agreed to move it forward in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the matter.

In a meeting the following month between American and German officials, the foreign ministry agreed to intervene with the federal finance office, Scrocca said.

“They agreed to move it forward,” he said. “We don’t want to say anything that would disrespect them in any way, but we think the language of the SOFA is clear. We just have to agree on the interpretation.”

“Of course,” Scrocca said. “Of course.”

TARS AND STARS

Tuesday, January 26, 2021
Paramedics, EMTs endure virus fears amid daily responsibilities

By Stefanie Dazio
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — It’s crowded in the back of the ambulance. Two emergency medical technicians, the patient, the gurney — and an unseen and unwellene passenger lurking in the air.

For EMTs Thomas Hoang and Joshua Hammond, the coronavirus is constantly close. COVID-19 has become their biggest fear during 24-hour shifts in California’s Orange County, riding with them from 911 call to 911 call, from patient to patient.

They and other EMTs, paramedics and 911 dispatchers in Southern California have been thrust into the front lines of the national epicenter of the pandemic. They are scrambling to help those in need as hospitals burst with a surge of patients after the holidays. Ambulances are again waiting outside hospitals for hours until beds become available, oxygen tanks are in alarmingly short supply and the vaccine rollout has been slow.

EMTs and paramedics have always dealt with life and death — they make split-second decisions about patient care, which hospital to race to, the best and fastest way to save someone — and now they’re just a breath away from becoming the patient themselves.

They gown up, mask up and glove up, “but you can only be so safe,” Hammond said. “We don’t have the luxury of being 6 feet apart from the patient.”

Statistics on COVID-19 cases and deaths among EMTs and paramedics — especially ones employed by private companies — are hard to find. They are considered essential health care workers but rarely receive the pay and protections given to doctors and nurses.

Hammond and Hoang work for Emergency Ambulance Service Inc., a private ambulance company in Southern California. They, like so many others, have long festered goals of becoming first responders to serve their communities.

Hammond, a 25-year-old nurse, is one test away from becoming a paramedic. He is preparing to go back to school. Hammond is one test away from becoming a paramedic.

Yet as COVID-19 infections surge and the risks increase, wonder: Is it worth risking your life — and the lives of your loved ones at home — for a small paycheck and a dream?

“It’s really hard to justify it beyond ‘I really want to help people,’” said Hammond, 25. “Is that worth the risk?”

For now, yes.

“I do want to do my part in helping people get better, in a sense,” said Hoang, 29.

Ashley Cortez, Adreanna Moreno and Jaime Hopper work 12-hour shifts as dispatchers for Care Ambulance Service Inc. If the EMTs are the front lines, these women are the scouts.

Their greatest fear is what’s called a “level zero” — when there are no ambulances left to send to an emergency. In Los Angeles County, one of the nation’s hardest-hit counties during the pandemic, the fear becomes a regular reality.

“EMTs and paramedics have always dealt with life and death — they make split-second decisions about patient care, which hospital to race to, the best and fastest way to save someone — and now they’re just a breath away from becoming a paramedic.”

Mexican president tests positive, has mild symptoms

By Christopher Sherman
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said he has tested positive for COVID-19, an announcement that comes as his country registers the highest levels of infections and deaths to date.

López Obrador, who has been criticized for his handling of Mexico’s pandemic and for not setting an example of prevention in public, said Sunday on his official Twitter account that his symptoms are mild and he is under medical treatment.

“I regret to inform you that I am infected with COVID-19,” he tweeted. “The symptoms are mild and I am already under medical treatment. As always, I am optimistic. We will all move forward.”

José Luis Alonzo Zegarra, Mexico’s director of epidemiology, said the 67-year-old López Obrador had a “light” case of COVID-19 and was “isolating at home.”

Mexico’s president said that while he recovered, Interior Secretary Olga Sánchez Cordero would be taking over for him in his daily news conferences, at which he usually speaks for two hours without breaks each weekday.

Despite his age and high blood pressure, López Obrador has not received a vaccine shot even though Mexico has already received a batch of Pfizer-BioNTech doses. He has said that health workers would be the first ones to get them. Under the government plan, people over 60 will start being vaccinated in February.

López Obrador has rarely been seen wearing a mask and continued to keep up a busy travel schedule, taking commercial flights.

He has also resisted locking down the economy, noting the devastating effect it could have on so many Mexicans who live day to day, despite that the country has registered nearly 150,000 COVID-19 deaths and more than 1 million infections.

In November, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization, urged Mexico’s leaders be serious about the virus and set examples for its citizens, saying that “Mexico is in bad shape.”

Group warns of huge economic gap from virus

By Pan Pylas
Associated Press

LONDON — Anti-poverty campaigner Oxfam warned Monday that the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic will lead to the biggest increase in global inequality on record unless governments radically rejig their economies.

In a report geared to inform discussions at the World Economic Forum’s online panels of political and business leaders this week, Oxfam said the richest 1,000 people have already managed to recoup the losses they recorded in the early days of the pandemic because of the bounce back in stock markets.

By contrast, Oxfam said it could take more than a decade for the world’s poorest to recover their losses.

“Rigged economies are funneling wealth to a rich elite who are riding out the pandemic in luxury, while those on the frontline of the pandemic — shop assistants, healthcare workers, and market vendors — are struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table,” said Gabriela Bucher, executive director of Oxfam International.

Using figures from Forbes’ 2020 Billionaire List, Oxfam said the world’s 10 richest people, including the likes of Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Warren Buffett, saw their fortunes increase by half a trillion dollars since the crisis began.

Meanwhile, using data specially provided by the World Bank, Oxfam said that in a worst-case scenario global poverty levels would be higher in 2030 than they were before the pandemic struck, with 3.4 billion people still living on less than $5.50 a day.

Bucher said women and mar-
Calif. lifts curfew, stay-at-home orders statewide

Associated Press
SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California lifted regional stay-at-home orders across the state Monday in response to improving coronavirus conditions, returning the state to a system of county-by-county restrictions, state health officials announced.

The order had been in place in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California, covering the majority of the state’s counties. The change will allow businesses such as restaurants to resume outdoor operations in many areas, though local officials could choose to continue stricter rules. The state is also lifting a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew.

“Together, we changed our activities knowing our short-term sacrifices would lead to longer-term gains. COVID-19 is still here and still deadly, so our work is not over, but it’s important to recognize our collective actions saved lives and we are turning a critical corner,” Dr. Tomas Aragon, the state’s public health director, said in a statement.

The decision comes with improving trends in the rate of infections, hospitalizations and intensive care unit capacity as well as vaccinations.

During the week, San Francisco Bay Area ICU capacity surged to 23% while the San Joaquin Valley increased to 13.3%, its first time above zero. The huge Southern California region, the most populous, remains at zero ICU capacity. As of the weekend, California has had more than 3.1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and 36,790 deaths, according to the state’s public health website.

Alaska

JUNEAU — Alaska held the enviable position of having the highest rate of coronavirus vaccinations per capita in the nation as of last week, the state’s top health official said.

Alaska Chief Medical Officer Anne Zink said Thursday that the progress was the result of community efforts to quickly distribute vaccinations and additional allotments for federal agencies within the state, KTOO-FM reported.

Zink told the Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce that Alaska’s 2,300 residents receive more doses of vaccine because of allowances above the state’s share for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Indian Health Service.

“We have the highest veterans per capita population. We have a large military presence. And we have a large Indigenous population with over 229 sovereign tribes,” Zink said. “And so, because of those reasons, we did get some additional vaccine in the state via those federal partnerships.”

Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation health officials are reporting 133 new COVID-19 cases and seven more deaths as a revised public health order is set to take effect.

The latest figures released Sunday bring the total reported coronavirus cases in the reservation to 27,484 with 973 known deaths.

Beginning Monday, the tribe extended its stay-at-home order with a revised nightly curfew to limit the spread of COVID-19. The Navajo Nation is also lifting weekend lockdowns to allow more vaccination events.

The actions in the latest public health emergency order will run through at least Feb. 15.

The curfew will run daily from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Connecticut

HARTFORD — Local health officials ordered a Connecticut home for retired nuns closed to visitors and the public because of a coronavirus outbreak that has infected nearly half of the more than 70 residents there as vaccinations were underway.

The restrictions on the School Sisters of Notre Dame home in Wilton were ordered by town Director of Health Barrington Beagle, and state health officials were expected to visit the property Monday to help with the outbreak, First Selectwoman Lynne Vanderslice said in a statement.

Vanderslice said 30 residents recently tested positive for COVID-19, as did a number of staff members. Health officials are doing contact tracing in Wilton as well as in the communities where staff members live.

Fifteen retired nuns recently received COVID-19 vaccinations under state guidelines, which allow vaccinations for people 75 years or older.

The remaining residents and staff were scheduled to be vaccinated Monday, after town officials obtained permission to administer the vaccine to non-eligible residents and staff, Vanderslice said.

Hawaii

HONOLULU — About half of Hawaii’s supply of 286,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine had been distributed through last week, officials said.

The state has more than 40 distribution sites for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, KITV-TV reported.

Democratic Lt. Gov. Josh Green said state leaders have pressured the federal government to continue supplying the state with doses.

“We now have another 50 or 60,000 scheduled appointments for people getting their either first shot or second shot,” Green said. “We didn’t want to leave people in the lurch.”

More than 5,500 people were scheduled to receive vaccine shots at Honolulu’s Blaisdell Center mass vaccination site Monday.

Massachusetts

BOSTON — Massachusetts relaxed some coronavirus restrictions Monday as several key metrics used to measure the spread of the pandemic trend in the right direction.

Restaurants, movie theaters and many other businesses will now be allowed to remain open past 9:30 p.m. Also, a rule that required people to stay at home from 10 p.m. until 5 p.m. except for work or other essential travel has been lifted.

The restrictions were adopted in November as new cases surged. The latest seven-day average positivity rate in Massachusetts has dropped to 4.83% as of Sunday, down from 7.2% on Jan. 10.

The seven-day rolling average of daily new cases in Massachusetts is also on the decline, at more than 4,200 on Sunday, down from at least 6,400 on Jan. 10, according to The COVID Tracking Project. Hospitalizations are also falling.

South Dakota

RAPID CITY — Organizers of South Dakota’s annual point-in-time count for the state’s unhoused homeless population have canceled the effort this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Sara Hornick, Rapid City-area coordinator of homeless services for Volunteers of America, said the count was called off mainly because of a shortage of volunteers, lack of personal protective equipment and concerns about the spread of COVID-19. She said the vulnerable homeless population is quite large, but the Department of Housing and Urban Development decided against the count, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Hornick said she’s not sure how the cancellation will affect federal funding because of the all the allowances in place this year because of the virus.

The state Department of Health on Sunday reported 185 new COVID-19 cases in the last day, increasing the total to 107,148 positive tests. The update listed nine new deaths, lifting the total number of fatalities to 217 in January and 1,705 since the start of the pandemic.

West Virginia

CHARLESTON — West Virginia is the first state to deploy the new system through Riverbridge, a company that helps states notify residents in emergencies such as a hurricane, flood or fire.

Residents who don’t want to or can’t go online to set up appointment information can still call a vaccination information line.

Currently, all residents 65 and older and some essential workers, such as health care personnel and teachers, are eligible for shots, although the state currently does not have enough vaccine doses for all senior citizens.

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Wisconsin

MILWAUKEE — Wisconsin health officials on Sunday confirmed 1,119 positive tests for the coronavirus in the last 24 hours, the lowest daily total since September.

The trend of lower cases and hospitalizations continues to play out in daily reports. The state Department of Health Services lists the weekly average at 1,596 cases, which is similar to numbers in mid-September. The state was averaging about 6,500 cases a day in mid-November.

There were about 548 new cases per 100,000 people in Wisconsin over the past two weeks, which ranks 37th in the country for new cases per capita, The COVID Tracking Project reported. One in every 423 people in Wisconsin tested positive in the past week.

Officials on Sunday confirmed six new deaths, for a total of 5,691 since the start of the pandemic.
China pushes fringe theories on pandemic origins, vaccine

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Chinese state media have been sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect attacks on the country. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the ongoing rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a WHO team in Wuhan, China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

While fringe theories may raise eyebrows overseas, the efforts also target a more receptive domestic audience. The social media hashtag “American’s Ft. Detrick,” started by the Communist Youth League, was viewed at least 1.4 billion times last week after a Foreign Ministry spokesperson suggested the lab in Maryland.

“Its purpose is to shift the blame from mishandling by (the) Chinese government in the pandemic’s early days to conspiracy by the U.S.” said Fang Shimin, a new-U.S.-based writer known for exposing faked degrees and other fraud in Chinese science. “The tactic is quite successful because of widespread anti-American sentiment in China.”

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Tokyo sees drop in cases; US commands in S. Korea, Japan report 26 infections

By Joseph Ditzler

TOKYO — Japan’s capital city reported 68 new coronavirus patients Monday, a decline of more than 50% in new cases over the previous four days.

Totals early in the week are typically low because many testing facilities are closed over the weekend, but Monday’s figures represent the first tally below 700 since Dec. 28 and below 1,000 since Jan. 12, according to public broadcaster NHK and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

U.S. military bases across Japan reported that nine people tested positive between 6:30 p.m. Friday and 6 p.m. Monday. Meanwhile, U.S. Forces Korea announced 17 cases, most them new arrivals to the peninsula between Jan. 8 and Wednesday, according to two news releases.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni over the weekend reported that seven people tested positive for COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, according to Facebook posts.

Four tested positive but were not in quarantine when they were discovered, according to the base on separate posts Saturday and Sunday. They were immediately isolated, according to the air base, which provided no further information.

Three others, new arrivals to Japan, tested positive on the test required to exit quarantine, according to the base on Saturday.

The Marine Corps also reported one new case Monday at Camp Foster on Okinawa, but provided no further information.

Kubasaki High School at Foster reopened Monday, nearly a week after it closed Jan. 19 to permit contact tracing and testing. Three people at the school had become infected, but subsequent tests of staff and students came back negative, according to principal James Strait in a message to families and employees Monday.

Naval Air Facility Atsugi, about 25 miles southwest of central Tokyo, had one person test positive while in quarantine, base spokesman Sam Samuelson said Monday.

Travelers wear masks inside a terminal at Narita International Airport outside Tokyo on Jan. 15.

In South Korea, a shelter-in-place, or lockdown, order at Yong-san Garrison in Seoul and for certain units at Camp Humphreys 55 miles to the south was extended to midnight Wednesday, USFK announced Monday.

On Sunday, Humphreys commander Col. Mike Tremblay closed the post exchange for a thorough cleaning after someone who tested positive stopped there, according to Tremblay’s remarks on a Facebook Live broadcast that morning. The exchange opened later that afternoon.

USFK reported that five individuals tested positive at Kunsan Air Base and at Humphreys over the weekend.

Three service members at Kunsan, who quarantined Wednesday after contact with another infected individual tested positive Friday, according to a news release.

At Humphreys, a Defense Department civilian employee tested positive Friday after developing symptoms; the other turned up Saturday during the stepped-up tracing campaign there, according to the Saturday release.

On Sunday, USFK reported that 12 people tested positive after arriving in South Korea over a two-week period.

One service member landed at Osan Air Base on the Patriot Express, a government-chartered air passenger service, on Jan. 18. Nine service members and two dependents arrived on commercial flights at Incheon International Airport on Jan. 8-10, Jan. 18 and Wednesday, according to the Sunday release.

Five people tested positive upon arrival and seven were positive on the test required before exiting the mandatory two-week quarantine.

South Korea reported 437 newly infected people nationwide Sunday, according to the Central Disease Control Headquarters. Seoul accounted for 91 of those, and Gyeonggi province, where Humphreys is located, reported 72.

State media and officials are sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect the attacks. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the ongoing rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a WHO team in Wuhan, China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

China pushes fringe theories on pandemic origins, vaccine

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Chinese state media have been sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect attacks on the country. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the ongoing rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a WHO team in Wuhan, China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

While fringe theories may raise eyebrows overseas, the efforts also target a more receptive domestic audience. The social media hashtag “American’s Ft. Detrick,” started by the Communist Youth League, was viewed at least 1.4 billion times last week after a Foreign Ministry spokesperson suggested the lab in Maryland.

“Its purpose is to shift the blame from mishandling by (the) Chinese government in the pandemic’s early days to conspiracy by the U.S.” said Fang Shimin, a new-U.S.-based writer known for exposing faked degrees and other fraud in Chinese science. “The tactic is quite successful because of widespread anti-American sentiment in China.”

Tokyo sees drop in cases; US commands in S. Korea, Japan report 26 infections

By Joseph Ditzler

TOKYO — Japan’s capital city reported 68 new coronavirus patients Monday, a decline of more than 50% in new cases over the previous four days.

Totals early in the week are typically low because many testing facilities are closed over the weekend, but Monday’s figures represent the first tally below 700 since Dec. 28 and below 1,000 since Jan. 12, according to public broadcaster NHK and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

U.S. military bases across Japan reported that nine people tested positive between 6:30 p.m. Friday and 6 p.m. Monday. Meanwhile, U.S. Forces Korea announced 17 cases, most them new arrivals to the peninsula between Jan. 8 and Wednesday, according to two news releases.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni over the weekend reported that seven people tested positive for COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, according to Facebook posts.

Four tested positive but were not in quarantine when they were discovered, according to the base on separate posts Saturday and Sunday. They were immediately isolated, according to the air base, which provided no further information.

Three others, new arrivals to Japan, tested positive on the test required to exit quarantine, according to the base on Saturday.

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Violent rioters, loyal to President Donald Trump, storm the Capitol on Jan. 6 in Washington, D.C.

BY MICHAEL BALSAMO

WASHINGTON — Federal law enforcement officials are examining a number of threats aimed at members of Congress as the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump nears, including ominous chatter about killing legislators or attacking them outside of the U.S. Capitol, a U.S. official said Tuesday.

The threats, and concerns that armed protesters could return to sack the Capitol anew, have prompted the U.S. Capitol Police and other federal law enforcement to insist thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington as the Senate moves forward with plans for Trump’s trial, the official said Sunday.

The shocking insurrection at the Capitol by a pro-Trump mob prompted federal officials to rethink security in and around its landmarks, resulting in an unprecedented lockdown for Biden’s inauguration. Though the event went off without any problems and armed protests around the country did not end up materializing, the threats to lawmakers ahead of Trump’s trial exemplified the continued potential for danger.

Similar to those that were interrupted by investigators ahead of Biden’s inauguration, the threats from law enforcement agents are tracking vary in specificity and credibility, said the official, who had been briefed on the matter. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included plots to attack members of Congress during travel to and from the Capitol complex during the trial, according to the official.

The official was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Law enforcement officials are already starting to plan for the possibility of armed protesters returning to the nation’s capital when Trump’s Senate trial on a charge of inciting a violent insurrection begins the week of Feb. 8. It would be the first impeachment trial of a former U.S. president.

Thousands of Trump’s supporters descended on the Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress met to certify Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential race. More than 800 are believed to have made their way into the Capitol during the riot, pushing past overwhelmed police officers. The Capitol police said that they planned for a free speech protest, not a riot, and were caught off guard despite intelligence suggesting the rally would descend into a riot. Five people died in the melee, including a Capitol police officer who was struck in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Though much of the security apparatus around Washington set up after the riot and ahead of Biden’s inauguration — it included scores of military checkpoints and hundreds of additional law enforcement personnel — is no longer in place, approximately 7,000 members of the National Guard will remain to assist federal law enforcement, officials said.

The Guard Bureau said that the number of Guard members in D.C. is less than 20,000 as of Sunday. All but about 7,000 of those will go home in the coming days. The Guard Bureau said that the number of troops in D.C. would then continue to decline in the coming weeks to about 5,000. They are expected to stay in D.C. until mid-March.

At least five people facing federal charges have suggested they believed they were taking orders from Trump when they marched on Capitol Hill on Jan. 6 to challenge the certification of Biden’s election victory. But now those comments, captured in interviews with law enforcement agents, are likely to take center stage as Democrats lay out their case.

More than 130 people have been charged by federal prosecutors for their roles in the riot. In recent weeks, others have been arrested after posting threats against members of Congress.

They include a Proud Boys supporter who was accused of planning to deploy “three cars full of armed patriots” to Washington, threatened harm against Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., and who is accused of stockpiling military-style combat knives and more than 1,000 rifle rounds in his New York home. A Texas man was arrested this week for taking a “yellow hammer” into the Capitol and for posting violent threats, including a call to assassinate Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.
Tenn. man with zip ties at Capitol could face charges

WASHINGTON — When President Joe Biden took office last week, he promised swiping, bipartisan legislation to solve the coronavirus pandemic, fix the economy and overhaul immigration.

Just days later, the Senate ground to a halt, with Democrats and Republicans unable to agree on even basic rules for how the evenly divided body should operate.

Meanwhile, key Republicans have quickly signaled discomfort with — or outright dismissal of — the cornerstone of Biden’s early legislative agenda, a $1.9 trillion pandemic relief plan that includes measures including $1,400 stimulus checks, vaccine distribution funding and a $15 minimum wage.

On top of that, senators are preparing for a wrenching second impeachment trial for former President Donald Trump, set to begin Feb. 9, which could nuke all other Senate business and further oblit- erate any hopes of cross-party cooperation.

“Taken together, this gridlock could imperil Biden’s entire early presid- ency, making it impossible for him to deliver on key promises as he contends with dueling crises. This reality could force Demo- crats to choose within a matter of weeks whether they will continue to pursue the sort of bipartisanship cooperation that Biden — and many senators of both parties — have eschewed, or whether to pursue procedural shortcuts or rule changes that would sideline the GOP but also are likely to divide their caucus.”

“Things move faster and faster nowadays,” said Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., commenting on the rising tensions Friday. “It doesn’t seem like there’s a honeymoon pe- riod.”

Much of the current conflict over the Senate rules comes courtesy of vet- eran Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who tran- sitioned to minority leader Wednesday after six years as ma- jority leader.

Just hours after Biden’s inaugu- ration, moments after a smiling Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., was first recognized as majority leader, McConnell pointedly noted on the Senate floor that the country elected a smaller House Demo- cratic majority, an evenly split Senate and a “president who promised unity.”

“The people intentionally en- trusted both political sides with significant power to shape our na- tion’s direction,” he said. “May we work together to honor that trust.”

Two days earlier, he had noti- fied his Republican colleagues in the Senate that he would deliver Schumer a sharp ultimatum: agree to preserve the legislative filibuster, the centerpiece of mi- nority power in the Senate or for- get about any semblance of coo- peration — starting with an agree- ment on the chamber’s operating rules.

The calculations for McConnell, according to Republicans, are simple. Not only is preserving the filibuster a matter that Republi- cans can unify around, it is some- thing that potentially divides Democrats, who are under enor- mous pressure to discard it to ad- vance their governing agenda.

“Republicans very much appre- ciate the consistency and the rock- solid fidelity to the norms and rules that make the Senate a mod- erating force in policymaking,” said Scott Jennings, a former McConnell aide. “The legislative filibuster is the last rule driving bi- partisanism in Washington.”

Schumer told McConnell on Friday that he considered any guarantee surrounding the fil- ibuster to be an “excessive de- mand” departing from the ar- rangement that the two parties worked out the last time there was a 50-50 Senate, in 2001.

“What’s fair is fair,” Schumer said, noting that McConnell changed Senate rules twice as ma- jority leader. “Leader McCon- nell’s proposal is unacceptable, and it won’t be accepted.”

Police weigh discipline in rally, Capitol riot

For two Virginia police officers who posed for a photo during the deadly U.S. Capitol insurrection, the reckoning has been swift and public: They were identified, charged with crimes and arrested.

But for five Seattle officers the outcome is less clear. Their identities still secret, two are on leave and three continue to work while a police watchdog investigates whether their actions in the nation’s capital on Jan. 6 crossed the line from protected political speech to lawbreaking.

The contrasting cases highlight the di-lemma faced by police departments nation- wide as they review the behavior of dozens of officers who were in Washington the day of the riot by supporters of President Don- ald Trump. Officials and experts agree that officers who were involved in the melee should be fired and charged for their role.

But what about officers who attend- ed only the Trump rally before the riot? How does a department balance an officer’s free speech rights with the blow to public trust that comes from the appearance of law enforcement at an event with far-right mil- itants who have been scrutinized for their behavior in the District of Columbia or face criminal charges for participating in the riot. Officials are looking into whether the officers violated any laws or policies or par- ticipated in a felony while in Washing- ton. A Capitol Police officer died after he was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher as rioters descended on the building and many other officers were injured. A woman was shot to death by Capitol Police and three other people did die after medical emer- gencies during the chaos.

Most of the officers have not been publi- cally identified; only a few have been charged. Some were identified by online sleuths. Others were reported by their col- leagues or turned themselves in.

“They were not on duty, it’s totally free speech,” said Will Aitchison, a lawyer in Portland, Ore., who represents law enforce- ment officers. “People have the right to express their political views regardless of who’s standing next to them. You just don’t get guilt by association.”

But Ayesha Bell Hardaway, a professor at Case Western Reserve University law school, said the group’s presence creates a credibility issue as law enforce- ment agencies work to repair community trust, especially after last summer’s pro- tests against police brutality sparked by the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

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Tenn. man with zip ties at Capitol could face charges

By SPENCER S. HU

WASHINGTON — A Tennessee man photographed holding white plastic handcuffs and a stun gun in the Senate gallery could face charges of sedition and other felonies in what prosecutors on Sun- day called the “insurrection” and “occupation” of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

“The evidence amassed so far subjects the defendant,” Erik Munchel of Nashville, Tenn., to additional felonies, “including ob-structing justice” and “possessing a firearm in furtherance of rioting ac- tivity, sedition and other offens- es,” federal prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

Within minutes of the govern- ment filing, Chief U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell stayed a low- er court’s conditional release of Munchel, and ordered his transfer from Tennessee to Washington for hearing.

Howell did not elaborate in a pair of one-page orders. However, prosecutors argued for Munchel’s detention, saying that he is “a threat to the safety of the felony while poss- essing a dangerous weapon, and that he poses a flight risk because he has a previous arrest for a weapon he stashed outside the building, and searched for law- makers whom he believed had committed “treason.”

A search of Munchel’s home turned up two tactical vests; 15 firearms, including assault rifles, a sniper rifle and tripod, other ri- fles, shotguns, and pistols; and a drum-style magazine, other mag- azines and ammunition — an “ar- senal” that prosecutors said “indicates the continued capacity to carry out the sort of fear and intimi- dation campaign in which he partook on January 6.”

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States eye allowing concealed carry of guns without a permit

By Lindsay Whitehurst
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Republican lawmakers in several more states want to loosen gun restrictions by allowing people to carry concealed firearms without having to get a permit, continuing a trend that gun control advocates call dangerous.

Fifteen states already allow concealed carry without a permit, and lawmakers in nine others have proposed allowing or expanding the practice. GOP governors are backing the changes in Utah and Tennessee. Another bill expanding permitless carry in Montana has passed the state House.

Most states require people to do things like get weapons training and undergo a background check to get a permit to carry a gun hidden by a jacket or inside a purse. Groups like the National Rifle Association and state lawmakers who support gun rights argue those requirements are ineffective and undermine Second Amendment protections.

The proposed changes come after gun sales hit historic levels last summer — reflected in FBI background checks — amid uncertainty and safety concerns about the coronavirus pandemic, the struggling economy and protests over racial injustice. Since then, a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Against that backdrop, the efforts to loosen concealed carry requirements are a frightening trend for Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action.

“It is dangerous to allow people to carry hidden, loaded handguns possibly without a background check or any training,” she said, adding that the annual rate of aggravated assaults with a firearm has increased 71% in Alaska since the state became the first to allow concealed carry without a permit in 2003.

The proposal in Utah would allow any U.S. citizen 21 and older to carry a concealed weapon without the now-required background check or weapons course. The bill does allow gun owners who want to carry a concealed weapon out of state to get a permit to do so after a background check and safety course.

Newly elected GOP Gov. Spencer Cox has said he supports the idea, in contrast to his predecessor and fellow Republican Gary Herbert, who vetoed a similar bill in 2013.

Supporters of the change argue that other state laws against such things as felons having guns and anyone carrying a firearm while intoxicated are enough to ensure guns are used safely.

“I have that right to protect myself, the Constitution says we have the right. Why are we putting a barrier for law-abiding citizens?” said Rep. Walt Brooks, the Republican lawmaker sponsoring the bill that got a early nod of approval from a House committee Friday.

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Hiker rescued after falling down cliff

OR
CASCADE LOCKS — A hiker was rescued in Oregon, apparently three days after he fell down a 50-foot cliff in the Columbia River Gorge.

The Coast Guard and the Hood River County Sheriff’s Office said they got the 43-year-old to safety after he was discovered by two other hikers at the base of the cliff, about a mile from the start of the Gorton Creek Trail.

He was conscious but injured, disoriented and possibly hypothermic, and authorities said he likely would not have survived the night.

The first responders who arrived were unable to transport the man to safety due to the difficult terrain, but a Coast Guard helicopter crew extracted him and brought him to a Portland hospital in stable condition.

Teen charged with gun possession for 2nd time

MA
SPRINGFIELD — A 15-year-old Massachusetts boy already wearing a court-ordered monitoring device on his ankle after a previous arrest was arrested again for allegedly being in possession of a gun, police said.

The Springfield youth was taken into custody after police obtained a search warrant for his home. Springfield police spokesman Ryan Walsh told Masslive.com.

Detectives had developed information that the suspect had an illegal firearm. Upon arrival at the home, police knocked and announced themselves but saw someone inside running “frantically” around the house apparently trying to hide evidence, police said.

After several minutes, the suspect tried to escape out a back door but officers were waiting. During the subsequent search, officers found a loaded handgun, Walsh said.

Woman sentenced to 18 months in medical hoax

IL
EAST ST. LOUIS — A 36-year-old southern Illinois woman was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison in a medical hoax that tricked people who gave her money and other benefits.

Sarah Delashmit of Highland pleaded guilty in October to multiple fraud charges after authorities claimed she defrauded non-profit organizations by pretending to have muscular dystrophy and breast cancer.

She must pay a $1,250 fine, forgeries, restitution, and drug charges.

Walking in a winter wonderland

Arabella Bothwell and her best friend, Anna Miller, of Avon, Colo., check out the village’s art installations in Beaver Creek, Colo. The village has installed art pieces throughout the season.

Massive fire at potato plant forces evacuations

WA
WARDEN — A massive fire at a potato plant in Warden brought fears of an exploding ammonia tank, forcing the evacuation of nearly a third of the town for several hours.

The fire broke out at the Washington Potato Plant in eastern Washington in one of the dehydrators, according to Kyle Foreman with the Grant County Sheriff’s Office, KOMO-TV reported. Employees in the building made it out safely as the flames spread, eventually engulfing much of the plant.

Among the items in the burning building was a large ammonia tank that firefighters worried could explode and send a toxic cloud over the region, and officials issued an urgent immediate evacuation notice for the surrounding area.

The fears of explosion subsided the next morning and residents were allowed back into their homes, Foreman said.

Man wins lifetime license for hunting and fishing

VT
MONTPELIER — A Massachusetts man won a lottery to hunt and fish in Vermont for free for the rest of his life.

Robert Hubbard, 57, of Warren, Mass., was drawn as the winner from more than 19,400 tickets bought in 2020, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department said.

Sales of the $2 tickets brought net sales of almost $39,000 to the department, which can be leveraged with federal funds to produce more than $155,000 to support fish and wildlife conservation in Vermont, officials said.

The lottery was open to residents and out-of-staters.

“These funds help us to manage the state’s sportfish and game animals, protect threatened and endangered species and conserve important habitat for wildlife,” Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter said.

Auto shop pays $2,033 for school lunch debts

ME
SUTTONS BAY — An auto repair shop tuned up the lunch accounts at a northern Michigan school district.

To celebrate five years in business, the owners of Mr. Hoxie’s Garage wrote a check for $2,033.99 to cover unpaid student lunch debts in Suttons Bay, near Traverse City, the Record-Eagle reported.

Kris Hoxie said the couple usually supports school arts and sports, but COVID-19 disrupted those programs.

The thieves drove the car to a parking lot near Crotona Park, where they stripped it down.

Surveillance images show three of the four people who were being sought in the heist. One, a woman, is carrying a bag and a drill.

Pair attacked man over out-of-state license plate

ME
PORTLAND — Portland police arrested two people they say attacked a man because his car had Vermont license plates.

The suspects yelled at the victim and told him that he shouldn’t be in Maine, then assaulted him, police said.

They damaged his car and tried to pull him out, police said. The victim, whose name was not made public, was not seriously hurt.

Police responding to calls from witnesses found that the suspects had fled by the time they arrived, but both were arrested a short time later.

Nathaniel Glavin, 41, and Vanessa Lazaro, 22, both face assault and drug charges.

Man fleed police, found dead in flooded quarry

PA
READING — A man fleeing police in eastern Pennsylvania after a shoplifting report went into the water of a nearby flooded quarry, disappeared and was found dead a day later, authorities said.

Police in Muhlenberg Township said the suspect ran from officers who were investigating a shoplifting report at a Target store. He got into the fenced-off former Berks Products Quarry in the township and went missing in the frigid water, police said. A search was called off due to darkness.

The Berks County coroner’s office said the body of Joshua Fontanelle, 25, of Minersville was recovered by divers the next day.

From the Associated Press
EU considers response to Navalny arrest, crackdown

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — European Union foreign ministers Monday debated the 27-nation bloc’s response to the arrest of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny and a weekend police crackdown that saw thousands taken into custody during protests in support of President Vladimir Putin’s most well-known critic.

“This wave of detention is something that worries us a lot, as well as the detention of Mr. Navalny,” EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said as he arrived to chair the ministerial meeting in Brussels. More than 3,500 people were reportedly taken into custody during the nationwide protests.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that “under the Russian constitution, everyone in Russia has the right to express their opinion and to demonstrate. That must be possible. The principles of the rule of law must apply there, too — Russia has always committed itself to that.”

He and other ministers called for the immediate release of the protesters.

The U.S. embassy spokeswoman in Moscow, Rebecca Ross, said on Twitter that the United States “supports the right of all people to peaceful protest, freedom of expression. Steps being taken by Russian authorities are suppressing those rights.”

The embassy also tweeted a State Department statement calling for Navalny’s release.

Putin’s spokesman said the statements interfered in the country’s domestic affairs and encouraged Russians to break the law.

Judge orders freedom for Uganda’s Bobi Wine

KAMPALA, Uganda — A judge ruled Monday that Ugandan security forces cannot detain presidential challenger Bobi Wine in his home, rebuking authorities for holding him under house arrest following a disputed election.

Wine, 38, whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, has been unable to leave his home since Jan. 14, when Ugandans voted in an election in which the singer-turned-politician was the main challenger to President Yoweri Museveni, 76. But the judge ruled Wine’s home is not a proper detention facility and noted that authorities should criminally charge him if he threatens public order.

From The Associated Press
WORLD

Heavy fighting erupts in Somali town near Kenya

Mogadishu, Somalia — Heavy fighting has broken out in a Somali town near the Kenyan border between Somali forces and those from the state of Jubbaland, as Somalia’s election troubles spill over into violence. Somalia’s information ministry in a statement early Monday accused Kenya-funded rebels of crossing into the town of Bulo Hawo and attacking Somali forces. But the Jubbaland vice president, Mohamud Sayid Adan, told reporters that Jubbaland forces stationed outside the town were attacked by what he called forces recently deployed to the region by the government in the capital, Mogadishu.

Both sides have claimed victory, but people in the town said that fighting continued and some people have begun to flee. The information ministry asserted that Somali forces were in control of the town. There were no immediate details available on casualties.

9 workers found dead in China mine explosion; toll now at 10

Beijing — Chinese rescuers found the bodies of nine workers in a mine explosion, raising the death toll to 10, officials said Monday.

Eleven others were rescued a day earlier after being trapped underground for two weeks at the gold mine in Shandong province. One person was still missing.

The cause of the accident at the mine, which was under construction, is under investigation. The explosion on Jan. 10 released 70 tons of debris that blocked a shaft, disabling elevators and trapping workers underground.

Rescuers drilled parallel shafts to send down food and nutrients and eventually bring up the survivors Sunday. Search efforts will continue for the remaining miner until he is found, said Chen Fei, the mayor of Yantai city, where the mine is located.

“Until this worker is found, we will not give up,” he said at a news conference.
On homers and fans, Aaron's touched 'em all

By David Von Drehle

The Washington Post

Long before the television impresario Ted Turner marketed the Atlanta Braves as America’s Team, Atlanta had no big league team at all. There was no Major League ballpark anywhere in the Deep South as of 1964, the year three disappeared civil rights workers were found buried in a shallow mass grave in Mississippi. The city dangled a new stadium, lavish TV rights, parking receipts and the generous patronage of Coca-Cola to attract a franchise.

The Braves of Milwaukee took the bait, which meant that Henry Aaron of Mobile, Ala., was headed back to the South. I’m going to call him Henry in this column because that was the name he preferred, as opposed to “Hank,” a nickname attached to him by a PR man who thought white fans might find it friendlier. A giant on and off the field, Aaron died Friday, a few weeks shy of his 86th birthday.

How did he feel about the move? As you might expect: “I have lived in the South, and I don’t want to live there again,” Aaron said in an appreciation of the Braves’ 1966 debut in Atlanta.

But Henry Aaron won over Atlanta and retired as the greatest player in franchise history — the franchise marketed as a team for the whole nation. His hero, Jackie Robinson, broke through baseball’s wall of segregation, but even he didn’t do it in Dixie. Aaron finished the job in large part because he was both supremely talented and incredibly steady.

There is a very exclusive club whose members hit a baseball well enough to compute a career batting average above .300, who hit hard enough to accumulate 300 or more home runs and who played long enough to hit safely at least 3,000 times. Club roster: Henry Aaron, Willie Mays, Stan Musial and George Brett. The club gets expanded if you double the number of homers to 600: Aaron and Mays. Add 155 home runs (more on this number later) and you have Aaron, all alone.

He was ridiculously consistent. Elected to the All-Star team in 21 consecutive seasons. Top in the batting order for most valuable player 19 seasons in a row. The all-time leader in runs batted in and total bases. Eight seasons of 40 or more home runs. Seven additional seasons with more than 30. He was the league leader in slugging percentage four times over three different decades.

That steadiness carried him through one of the longest and loneliest of all civil rights advances, as year after year Aaron and the National League’s best pitchers in pursuit of the most hallowed record of the most celebrated player in the history of the national pastime. A person is rarely more alone than when he’s the center of an epic of individual achievement. Aaron needed 715 of them to unseat Babe Ruth as the all-time home run king.

(About that number: Major League Baseball recently took the long-overdue step of acknowledging that the organized Negro Leagues are properly part of “major league” history. Statistics racked up before Robinson’s trailblazing 1947 season will be counted toward records. The Mays, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, Roy Campanella and others who played on both sides of the egregious color line. Aaron’s five documented home runs for the all-Black Indi- anapolis Clowns came in 1952, too late to be added to his totals.)

A lifetime record creeps up gradually. Through the stride of the late 1960s and early 1970s — when the awed white superstars George Wallace was winning electoral votes for president and white citi- zens from Boston to Denver were protest- ing violently against school desegregation measures — Aaron closed relentlessly on Ruth.

“My kids had to live like they were in prison because of kidnap threats,” he later re- called. “I had to go out the back door of the ballpark. I had to have a police escort with me all the time. I was getting threatening letters every single day.”

One lonely trip to the plate after another. I turned 13 in the winter of 1974, when Henry Aaron spent the offseason parked at 713. He needed one more to tie and another to break the record. Everyone knew that baseball’s steadiest superstar would finish the job promptly once the new season started. And he did, in a movie shown on Opening Day, April 4, and another on April 8. Still, then-commissioner Bowie Kuhn made no effort to be present.

When “The Hammer,” as he was known, died, he died in Atlanta. The place he didn’t want to go had become the place he didn’t want to leave. A prosperous businessman and recipient of the prestigious title of Ge- orgia Trustee, Henry Aaron had done as much as anyone to redeem the South from the clutches of its history and to open a way forward. Not with one swing of the bat, but with tens of thousands, he said, was “just keep swinging.”

The Washington Post columnist David Von Drehle is the author of four books, including “Wage to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America’s Most Pardoned Year” and “The Triangle That Changed America.”

OPINION

Republicans are arguing against Trump with Trumpism

By James Downs

The Washington Post

I n the wake of the Donald Trump–incit- ed riot at the U.S. Capitol, major news- porters of the former president de- nied that he’s fighting the liberal media on his behalf. So far the claim has not been supported. In truth, in a way that he has never been, Trump is the most important—or at least the most visible—agent of a Republican wave in Congress in the wake of the riot.

Several days of Republicans dismissing President Joe Biden’s first actions as being of the “radical left,” as Rubio did Friday, it’s true, is more than just the result of an inter- est in working with the new White House.

But as weak as Rubio and Rounds’ arguments were, they were not deflected more flagrantly than Paul’s. Rand Paul, R-Ky., on ABC’s “This Week” last Sunday, the day before his distortions. But Paul achieved another major victory. The New York Times noted that even Paul said “most,” not all — that time and again Trump’s team was un- able to prove his case on the merits. He could have observed that as a state’s rights sup- porter, Paul should have agreed with several of the dismissals, as when the Supreme Court rejected Texas’ bizarre bid to challenge other states’ election results. Or he could have asked Paul how he expects a con- gressional investigation to assure GOP vot- ers who still believe in massive “Obama- gate” and Benghazi scandals despite years of other investigations.

The irony is that it’s not impeachment that keeps the country from moving on from Jan. 6, it’s Trump himself, and the unavoidable hangover from his egregious behavior. We’re just days removed from an attempted coup that struck at the country’s very foun- dations. Yet while law enforcement officials have arrested dozens of the perpetrators, the ground remains fertile for another attempt because one of our two parties remains cap- tured by the man who incited the attack. So long as Trump maintains his dangerous grip, this country will struggle to move forward.

James Downs is The Washington Post’s Digital Opinions Editor. He previously wrote for The New Republic and Foreign Policy magazine.
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Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 Ancient Brit
5 Six-pack muscles
8 Pepper dispenser
12 Hideaway
13 Used a chair
14 Exotic berry
15 Region
16 Clog-busting tools
18 Advertised insistently
20 Available
21 Charged bit
22 "Aladdin" monkey
23 Put in office
26 Bird's feathers
30 Caesar or Vicious
31 Microwave
32 Sass
33 Used tweezers
36 Musical set in Argentina
38 Tramcar contents
39 Motorist's org.
40 Doofus
43 Guest of a guest
47 Fruity dessert
49 Lovers' quarrel
50 Mystique
51 Possess
52 Guthrie of folk
53 Tennis barriers
54 Caustic cleaner
55 Pitcher Nolan

DOWN
1 Applaud
2 — of Sandwich
3 Stead
4 Dire
5 Colorado ski resort
6 Hairy no more
7 Disco guy on "The Simpsons"
8 Large champagne bottle
9 "Law & Order: SVU" actor
10 Yuri Zhivago's love
11 Speak like Sylvester
12 Celebrity chef Matsuhisa
13 Understood
14 Exotic berry
15 Region
16 Clog-busting tools
17 Christian name
18 Advertised insistently
19 Available
20 Available
22 Swiss peak
23 Sixth sense
24 Like Abner
25 Sch. URL ender
26 Knee protector
27 "The Greatest"
28 "Shoo!"
29 Clean air org.
30 Caesar or Vicious
31 Microwave
32 Sass
33 Used tweezers
36 Musical set in Argentina
38 Tramcar contents
39 Motorist's org.
40 Doofus
43 Guest of a guest
47 Fruity dessert
49 Lovers' quarrel
50 Mystique
51 Possess
52 Guthrie of folk
53 Tennis barriers
54 Caustic cleaner
55 Pitcher Nolan

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CRYPTOQUIP

1-26
MT N H A N X H FLH ATTHLHC
BARH TAAC ODZ LHTDBH MZ
BQALKTDXXG, ZIHG RPMIZ
OH BNDI KMKP QFXALMHB .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OLD-TIME SINGING SUPERSTAR WHO HAD A GREAT MANY PASTIMES HE WOULD ENGAGE IN: HOBBY DARIN.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals F
Larry King, shown on the “Larry King Live” set on CNN in Washington, D.C., in 1994, put guests at ease with his suspenders, Coke-bottle glasses, vintage microphone and casual demeanor. King died Jan. 23 at age 87.

Beloved talk show host Larry King’s style helped rewrite cultural history

By Hank Stuever

The Washington Post

Larry King’s vintage microphone, the RCA Type 77-D that referenced his rise as a radio man, was a prop that worked as a powerful symbol of both past and present in a relentlessly evolving media age. The microphone was a security blanket for everyone involved: for King, for his 60,000 interview subjects, and for the viewers of his nightly CNN talk show, once touted by the network to number a billion or so worldwide.

The microphone indicated that King — who died Jan. 23 at age 87, having lived most of his life as a persona more than a person — wanted the whole world to hear what his guests had to say. The microphone didn’t stand for posterity or nostalgia so much as a visual representation of the major media moment, the heat of notoriety in its full and often fleeting flash. The microphone acknowledged the need to ask and answer the great mysteries of life — the scandals, the personal struggles, the rises and the falls, the regrets in real time.

Mostly, the microphone stood for an increasingly rare virtue: listening. (Listening, and its nearly extinct counterpart: a genuine, unflagging curiosity about someone other than yourself.)

Some of King’s guests were better than others, of course. Not every night could have Marlon Brando, not every night could feature Israel’s Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat and Jordan’s King Hussein historically united on the same show in 1995. Not every night could be Vladimir Putin or Ronald Reagan, Lady Gaga or Muhammad Ali, Miss Piggy and Kermit, Paul and Ringo. But his show was invariably, relentlessly topical. It was broad in a time of wondrous breadth, before the disrupting rise of the niche market.

To be sitting at the table on CNN’s “Larry King Live” — just you, him and the big old mic — was proof that one had truly arrived. The suspenders. The odd questions. Why, King wanted to know. His favorite question, because that’s all any of us ever really want to know: Why?

During his 25-year reign on CNN, “Larry King Live” was a necessary and vital stop on the way to one’s public judgment. More than one celebrity used his show as a form of recompense, coming to him dirty and damaged with the hope of leaving clean. Others used it as an opportunity to appear vulnerable. Most used him as a means to present a persona.

No matter what brought them to “Larry King Live,” it was understood that the questions would be coming from a place of genuine wonder, rather than showy intellect. King was a singular personality; a mutation of the common man, a New Yorker unafraid to just ask the question. The effect was a successful mixing of the daft with the deft. When news of his death spread over the weekend, much of the immediate tribute came in the form of defense of King’s mastery of the “dumb question,” and rightly so. Most of the world knew that the dumb question is a powerful tool of inquiry. Kind people know it, too, and still practice the art. In its disarming way, the dumb question produces answers that the subject isn’t tired of answering. It turns the interview into a conversation. It invites rather than antagonizes.

King would often boast about not boning up on the details of a subject’s life and work before an interview. He trusted confident-ly into the emotional and factual blind. It could seem rude and even socially inept, but the viewer identified with it.

His dumb questions, of course, produced a legendary archive of laughable moments. In one often-shared clip from 2007, he asked Jerry Seinfeld about the end of “Seinfeld” — was it canceled? (“You think I was canceled?” Seinfeld replied. “Do you know who I am? ... Seventy-five million viewers on the last episode.”)

It’s telling that CNN was never quite able to find the world’s next Larry King after he left the network in 2010. There’s no room anymore for a seasoned personality who blunders his or her way around and through the zeitgeist, on behalf of an audience that blunders a bit, too.

King was afraid of dying. Or at least desperately curious. Being interviewed by Mike Wallace in 1992, King seemed fixated on the idea that we are but mere “blips” in the universe. Where do we go when we die?

King was never sure, often telling people he relied on the maybe/maybe-not eschatological stance of his Jewish background. Still, it’s fitting to imagine him loosed in that great cocktail party in the sky, reacquainted with so many of the famous and not so famous he’d interviewed in this realm. Asking dumb question after dumb question, with all eternity to get the answers.

Venerable NBC anchor Tom Brokaw retiring from 55-year career

One-time NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw, a presence in America’s living rooms for more than two decades and the longtime face of the network, retired Jan. 22 after an award-winning 55-year career.

Brokaw, who turns 81 next month, came to the network’s 30 Rockefeller Plaza headquarters in 1976 as host of the “Today” show before moving to the anchor chair in 1982. He shared the job with co-anchor Roger Mudd before taking over by himself a year later, spending 21 of his 55 years with NBC in the anchor’s chair.

Brokaw, his down-to-earth delivery leavened by a quiet sense of humor, soon attracted a national following. He worked as a news editor at NBC Nightly News in 2012.

The son of South Dakota became one of television news’ most trusted sources, and he collected many awards for his work: The Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Award, a dozen Emmys, two Peabody Awards. In each of his last four years at the anchor desk, the “NBC Nightly News” was honored with the Murrow Award for Best Newscast.

The globe-trotting journalist reported from Normandy Beach on the 60th anniversary of D-Day, traveled to Afghanistan for a piece on al-Qaida, and was the only network correspondent on the last episode.”


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NEW JERSEY DEVILS —
Clarkson 4, Quinnipiac 2
Minnesota St. 4, Ferris St. 1
Michigan St. 2, Ohio St. 0

CALGARY FLAMES —
1913 —
Jim Thorpe gives up his track medals from the 1912 Olympic games as a result of his having been a professional. 

Selected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. 

1946 —
Elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. 

1960 —
Joe DiMaggio elected to the Hall of Fame.

1965 —
Edmonton's Wayne Gretzky won their third Super Bowl in 10 years, beating the Dallas Cowboys 30-21. 

1986 —
Pete Rozelle is chosen the new NFL commissioner. 

1991 —
Jim Tressel's Ohio State defeated the University of Connecticut 21-15 at the Orange Bowl in Miami. 

2005 —
Rafael Benitez, former coach of Chelsea and Liverpool, was named manager of the Seattle Sounders. 

2013 —
Jim Thome gives up his 600th career home run. 

2019 —
Pete Alonso of the New York Mets became the 18th man to hit 50 home runs in his first five seasons in a major league. 

2021 —
Tiger Woods won the 150th Open Championship at St. Andrews in Scotland.

AP SPORTLIGHT

Sunday's scores 

High Point 81, Presbyterian 57
Morgul 86, East Carolina 53
Oakland 89, New Mexico St. 72
Utah 87, Nevada 85

Sunday's scores 

Alabama 67, UNC-Wilmington 62

Georgia Hall, $28,887 70­70­67­66—273 ­11
Mi Jung Hur, $16,954 71­71­71­68—281 ­3
P. Lindberg, $18,272 70­72­66­72—280 ­4
Stacy Lewis, $18,929 66­71­74­68—279 ­5
Sophia Popov, $33,333 68­69­67­68—272 ­12
B. Lincicome, $43,621 66­74­64­66—270 ­14
Jessica Korda, $180,000 65­69­60­66—260 ­24

BRIEFLY

The Russian anti-doping agency confirmed Monday that it will not file an appeal to further loosen restrictions on its teams at the Olympics and other major sporting events. 

The Court of Arbitration for Sport last month ruled that Russia’s name, flag and anthem would be barred from the next two Olympics after backing the World Anti-Doping Agency’s finding that doping data was manipulated. 

However, CAS halved the duration of the sanctions from four years to two, removing vetoing requirements for Russian athletes and allowed them to keep wearing their national colors.

The Russian agency, known as RUSADA, had the option to file an appeal with the Swiss supreme court on procedural grounds. It said Monday that it still regards the ruling that doping data in Moscow was modified as “flawed and one-sided” but was satisfied that CAS rejected tougher sanctions proposed by WADA.

In other Olympic news: 

* Olympian Ryan Crouser broke the world indoor shot put record at an American Track League meet in Fayetteville, Ark., on Sunday. Crouser tossed the shot put 22.92 meters (75 feet, 7 inches) on his first attempt to break the mark of 22.66 (74-1/4) set by Randy Barnes on Jan. 20, 1989. Crouser's record is pending ratification.

Austria’s Krickierny wins Super G at Kitzbühel

Austrian skier Vincent Krickierny bounced back from two disappointing results in downhill in downing the field to win a men’s World Cup Super-G on Monday in Kitzbühel, Austria.

Krickierny didn’t have a clean run but he charged all the way to the finish line on Kitzbühel, one of the world’s most prestigious skiing courses.

Kim wins by one shot at The American Express

Si Woo Kim birdied the final three holes to finish an 8-under 64, rallying past late-charging Patrick Cantlay on Sunday to win The American Express on Sunday in La Quinta, Calif., for his third PGA Tour victory.

The 25-year-old South Korean wrapped up his third bogey-free round of the tournament — all on the Pete Dye-designed Stadium Course — with a two-putt par on the 18th to finish at 23-under 265.

In other golf news:

* Jessica Korda closed with a 6-under 66 and held a 30-foot birdie putt on the first playoff hole to beat Danielle Kang of the Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions, the LPGA Tour season opener at Lake Buena Vista, Fla.
**Ullmark lifts Sabres over Capitals**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Linus Ullmark stopped 28 shots in regulation and overtime and three more in the shootout to help the Buffalo Sabres beat the Washington Capitals 4-3 on Sunday for just their second victory in six games this season.

Ullmark picked up his first win of the season six days after learning of the death of his father at age 63. It was Ullmark’s second consecutive start after taking some time away from playing hockey, and the Sabres needed him with goaltender Carter Hutton injured.

“It’s been rough, definitely,” Ullmark said. “There’s a lot of emotions and thoughts that had to be processed. I’m trying to take it day by day. Try to be happy when I’m happy, try to be sad when I’m sad and right now I’m utterly grateful for getting a win.”

Captain Jack Eichel scored in the shootout and Colin Miller, Victor Olofsson and Eric Staal each scored on the power play for Buffalo, which snapped a two-game skid. The Sabres outshot the Capitals 48-31 and beat them for the first time in four meetings.

Justin Schultz scored his first goal with Washington and mainstays T.J. Oshie and Nicklas Backstrom each had a power-play goal. The Capitals were playing without five prominent players: captain Alex Ovechkin, center Evgeny Kuznetsov, defenseman Dmitry Orlov and goalies Ilya Samsonov and Ilya Samsonov’s brother, Andrei Samsonov.

The Capitals were playing without their top three forwards: Alex Ovechkin, Evgeny Kuznetsov and Oshie, who were out due to injury.

The Capitals were playing with the man advantage in a 7-0 victory over the Predators in their delayed opener. Dallas was 3-4-0 for the power play this time.

The Stars tied the 1995-96 Pittsburgh Penguins each and Colin Miller, Victor Olofsson and Eric Staal each scored on the power play for Buffalo, which snapped a two-game skid. The Sabres outshot the Capitals 48-31 and beat them for the first time in four meetings.

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Leonard, Clippers win 7th straight

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kawhi Leonard scored 34 points and the Los Angeles Clippers beat Oklahoma City 108-101 on Sunday for their seventh consecutive victory and second straight over the Thunder. Serge Ibaka added 17 points. At 13-4, the Clippers are tied with the Lakers for the best record in the NBA. Leonard also had nine rebounds and eight assists. He had 31 points in a 14-point victory over the Thunder on Friday night.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 23 points and five of six.

Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard had 34 points and nine rebounds in a 108-101 win Sunday over the Oklahoma City Thunder in Los Angeles.

Bucks 129, Hawks 115: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points and 14 rebounds and host Milwaukee beat Atlanta to snap a two-game losing streak. Antetokounmpo had eight assists, finishing two shy of a triple-double. Bobby Portis added 21 points, finishing two shy of a triple-double. Gorge Hill added 22 points. Oklahoma City added 23 points in a 14-point victory over the Thunder.

The Grizzlies won’t play until at least Saturday, after the NBA called off yet another game.

By Tim Reynolds

The Washington Wizards are finally back. The Memphis Grizzlies aren’t ready yet.

Washington lost 121-101 at San Antonio on Sunday night, the Wizards’ first game in 13 days after having six players test positive for COVID-19 and three others having to miss several days following contact tracing.

The Grizzlies won’t play until at least Saturday, after the NBA called off yet another game — the 20th since Jan. 10 and the 21st postponement this season.

Memphis was scheduled to play Sunday and Monday at home against Sacramento. Those were called off last week and now, the Grizzlies’ home game against Charlotte that was scheduled for Wednesday is off as well.

The NBA said the Wednesday game was called off “due to contact tracing within the Grizzlies and the length of time preceding the game during which Memphis will be unable to practice.”

It was the sixth postponement for the Grizzlies, matching Washington for the most in

we get to play again and that’s the bottom line. It’s been a long time. We missed it. It’s good to be back.”

Patty Mills led San Antonio with 21 points. The earliest Memphis will play again is Saturday, also in San Antonio. Having six games called off in the season’s first half means, if the Grizzlies and Washington are to play the full 72-game schedule, they would have 41 games in a 67-day span in the second half.

“I just hope that we never have to deal with this again,” Brooks said.

Later this week, the NBA and National Basketball Players Association are expected to consider whether the stiffer protocols put in place Jan. 12 can be loosened in some way. They were originally put in place in an effort to prevent the virus-related issues started climbing.

Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard had 34 points and nine rebounds in a 108-101 win Sunday over the Oklahoma City Thunder in Los Angeles.

Saturday’s games

Philadelphia 114, Detroit 110
Minnesota 120, New Orleans 110
Los Angeles 129, Miami 124
Utah 127, Golden State 108
Sacramento 112, Houston 110
L.A. Lakers 105, Chicago 90
Denver 126, Los Angeles 112
San Antonio 104, Oklahoma City 117
Oklahoma City 109, Minnesota 115
Portland 116, New York 113
Sacramento at Memphis, ppd

Sunday’s games

Charlotte at Orlando
L.A. Clippers 108, Oklahoma City 100
San Antonio 114, Cleveland 112
Charlotte 107, Orlando 104
San Antonio 121, Washington 101
Miami 117, Oklahoma City 115
Portland 116, New York 113
Sacramento at Memphis, ppd

Tuesday’s games

L.A. Clippers at Atlanta
Wizards at Houston

NBA leaders

Through Jan. 24

Western Conference

L.A. Clippers 13 4 .765 --
L.A. Lakers 13 4 .765 --
Phoenix 13 4 .765 --
Denver 16 4 .500 4½
Portland 15 5 .750 4½
Sacramento 14 5 .735 4½

Southeast Division

Miami 10 5 .667 5 ½
Atlanta 8 6 .556 2 ½
Toronto 9 7 .500 3 ½
Washington 10 7 .588 2 ½

Central Division

Milwaukee 10 5 .667 5 ½
Indiana 9 6 .600 2 ½
Chicago 7 7 .491 3
Detroit 3 7 .462 7

Northwest Division

Denver 11 4 .706 1
Utah 10 5 .625 2 ½
Portland 10 6 .600 2 ½
Denver 9 7 .563 1
Minnesota 8 7 .273 6 ½

Pacific Division

L.A. Clippers 13 4 .765 --
L.A. Lakers 13 4 .765 --
Phoenix 13 4 .765 --
Denver 16 4 .500 4½
Sacramento 14 5 .735 4½

Eastern Conference

Atlanta Division

Philadelphia 12 5 .706 --
Boston 8 6 .667 5 ½
Brooklyn 10 7 .692 3 ½
New York 8 10 .444 4½
Toronto 9 10 .487 4½

Southeast Division

Atlanta 8 8 .500 --
Charlotte 7 9 .438 1
Orlando 7 10 .412 1 ½
Miami 6 9 .400 1 ½
Washington 6 9 .400 1 ½

Central Division

Milwaukee 10 5 .625 --
Indiana 9 7 .563 1
Cleveland 7 8 .500 2
Chicago 7 9 .438 3
Detroit 3 13 .186 7

Western Conference

Memphis 7 6 .538 --
San Antonio 9 8 .529 --
Dallas 8 8 .500 ½
Houston 6 9 .400 1 ½
New Orleans 5 10 .333 3

At the end of the game, it was games.

Durant, BKN 13 416 96 306 31.2
Brown, BOS 15 157 56 410 27.3
Embiid, PHI 14 123 125 388 27.7
Sabonis, IND 16 52 155 207 12.9
Lillard, POR 15 130 115 433 28.9

Washington 12 5 .706 --
Boston 9 6 .667 2
Brooklyn 10 6 .556 2 ½
New York 8 10 .444 4½
Toronto 9 10 .487 4½

Minnesota 5 10 .333 3
Utah 12 5 .706 --
Denver 9 7 .563 1
Oklahoma City 6 9 .400 1 ½
Sacramento 4 11 .277 7½

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The earliest Memphis will play again is Saturday, also in San Antonio. Having six games called off in the season’s first half means, if the Grizzlies and Washington are to play the full 72-game schedule, they would have 41 games in a 67-day span in the second half.

“I just hope that we never have to deal with this again,” Brooks said.

Later this week, the NBA and National Basketball Players Association are expected to consider whether the stiffer protocols put in place Jan. 12 can be loosened in some way. They were originally put in place in an effort to curb travel to anywhere except games, practices and workouts as the league’s number of virus-related issues started climbing.
Chiefs dump Bills in AFC championship

Mahomes returns to KC lineup, leads defending champs back to Super Bowl

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — It took the Kansas City Chiefs five frustrating defeats to make their third Super Bowl appearance. Now, the defending champs are headed there for the second consecutive year.

Show no lingering effects from his concussion, Patrick Mahomes sliced up Buffalo's secondary with ruthless efficiency Sunday night, helping the Chiefs roll to a 38-24 victory over Josh Allen and the Bills in the AFC championship game.

The reigning Super Bowl MVP finished with 325 yards passing and three touchdowns, most of it to favorite targets Travis Kelce and Tyreek Hill, who complemented their star quarterback with a record-setting night.

The Chiefs will face a familiar foe — Tom Brady — and the NFC champ Buccaneers in two weeks in Tampa, Fla.

"It was just trusting each other. The best thing about this team is we believe in each other," said Mahomes, who was also dealing with a toe injury. "But the job's not finished. We're going to Tampa; we're trying to run it back."

Kelce finished with 13 catches for 118 yards and two touchdowns, and Hill added nine catches for 172 yards, becoming the first duo in NFL history with consecutive games of at least 100 yards receiving each in a single postseason.

Clyde Edwards-Helaire and Darrel Williams added short TD runs for the Chiefs, who will try to become the eighth franchise and first since the Brady-led New England Patriots in 2016 to make their third Super Bowl in four decades to make their third Super Bowl.

Buffalo comes up short in breakout season

By JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

Josh Allen played a huge role in getting the Buffalo Bills to their first AFC championship game in 27 years.

The third-year starter was the first to acknowledge he needs to be much better for the Bills to take the next step.

"It's going to fuel us. I have no doubt in my mind that we will be back," Allen said after the Bills were outclassed in a 38-24 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs.

"We're still young, and we're only going to get better," he added. "That's the one thing I take from this. We're close."

Hardly close enough.

In a season that started 7-2 (5-0-2) butered numerous slumps by sweeping the New England Patriots for the first time since 1999, and claimed their first division title in 25 years, Allen and Co. were reminded of how far they still have to go in losing to the defending Super Bowl champs.

Buffalo's bend-but-don't-break defense wilted, squandering a 9-0 lead by giving up three touchdowns in the span of 10:04 in the second quarter. Allen simply couldn't keep up.

After scoring their first touchdown set up by Taiwan Jones recovering Mecole Hardman's muff, the Chiefs' lead to 21-12 rather than go on fourth-and-goal from the 2 with 14 seconds left. It happened again on Buffalo's opening drive of the third quarter, which ended with Bass hitting a 27-yarder on fourth-and-3 from the Chiefs 8.

"That's coach's decision," Allen said. "We had three downs to get in there, but I didn't do our job. Lack of communication, lack of execution there falls on my shoulders."

Coach Sean McDermott acknowledged he considered going for it on fourth down.

"Maybe if I had to do it over again I would've gone for one of them," he said. "We were having trouble coming up with points. I wanted to at least have something to show for it going into the half."

Buffalo's defense didn't help, unable to solve the Chiefs for a second time this season. In Week 6, the Bills were trampled in a 26-17 loss in Week 6.

The reigning Super Bowl MVP finished with 325 yards passing and three TDs.

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes celebrates after throwing a touchdown pass to Travis Kelce during the second half of the AFC title game Sunday in Kansas City, Mo. Mahomes, who suffered a concussion last week, had 325 yards passing and 3 TDs. It capped a bitter night for the Bills, who had reached their first AFC title game since beating Kansas City 7-6 in the second round in 1993.

Chiefs 38, Bills 24

Buffs | KC
--- | ---
First Quarter
Buf—FG Bass 51, 11:27
Buf—Kick 3 pass from Allen (kick failed), 6:14
Second Quarter
KC—Hardman 5 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 14:26
KC—Kelce 5 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 4:53
KC—Edwards-Helaire 1 run (Butker kick), 4:21
Buf—FG Bass 28, 10:11
Third Quarter
KC—Butker 27 FG, 7:49
KC—Kelce 5 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 3:29
Fourth Quarter
KC—Kelce 5 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 7:26
Buf—Mckeenzie 6 pass from Allen (return failed), 6:48
Buf—FG Bass 51, 3:14

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

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Packers’ LaFleur kicking himself over FG decision

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

Matt LaFleur put the game in the hands of his defense instead of All-Pro quarterback Aaron Rodgers in a decision that will be questioned in Green Bay for years.

With a spot in the Super Bowl on the line, LaFleur opted for a field goal on fourth-and-goal from the 8 when trailing by eight points with just over two minutes remaining in the NFC championship game.

Rodgers never got the ball back in his fourth straight title game loss as Tom Brady and Tampa Bay ran out the clock in a 31-26 win Sunday.

“The way our defense was playing, it felt like the right decision to do,” LaFleur said. “It just didn’t work out.”

The key moment came after Green Bay rallied from 18 points down in the second half to get into position to send the game into overtime late in regulation. The Packers drove down to the 8-yard line with 2:22 to play before Rodgers threw an incomplete pass to Allen Lazard followed by two more to Davante Adams.

That left LaFleur with a decision to make with 2:09 to play and he went with the field goal attempt instead of another shot into the end zone for a possible TD and 2-point conversion to tie the game.

“Any time it doesn’t work out, you always regret it,” LaFleur said. “It was the circumstances of having three shots and coming away with no yards and knowing that not only you need the touchdown, but you need the 2-point (conversion). We essentially had four timeouts with the two-minute warning. We knew we needed to get a stop.”

Rodgers never had a chance to respond once Lazard was ruled out of bounds on a holding penalty.

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Brady’s bunch: Bucs win at Green Bay, reach Super Bowl

By Steve Megargee
Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Tom Brady has a new team, in a new town. The analytics were against the Packers going 18 points down in the second half to get into position to send the game into overtime late in regulation.

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Tampa Bay’s Scotty Miller catches a 39-yard touchdown pass against Green Bay’s Kevin King.
Rodgers laments his and Pack’s uncertain future

BY DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

Aaron Rodgers was lamenting the sudden end of a remarkable season he’ll treasure long after he’s retired, running through a list of Green Bay Packers teammates he’s grown the closest to.

“There’s a lot of guys’ futures that are uncertain, myself included,” Rodgers said, managing a slight laugh as if to momentarily soften this harsh reality in the immediate aftermath of the loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the NFC championship game. “That’s what sad about it most.”

The 37-year-old produced by most measures in 2020 the finest performance of his brilliant career, making him a leading contender for a third NFL MVP award.

The Packers went 13-3 for the top seed in the NFC, cruising past the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round and finally giving Rodgers a home game to play for a spot in the Super Bowl. His other four shots at it as the starter, including the win at Chicago (2010 season) that preceded his only championship, were on the road. They lost in the semifinals at San Francisco (2019), Atlanta (2016) and Seattle (2014).

Ten years and counting since the Packers won it all with Rodgers, this 31-26 loss to Brady and the Bucs will sting for awhile. Especially considering what happened last spring, when Green Bay drafted quarterback Jordan Love in the first round. Rodgers is signed through 2023, but that sure doesn’t guarantee he will stay that long — or that he’d want to.

“I’m going to have to take some time away for sure and clear my head and just kind of see what’s going on with everything, but it’s pretty tough right now,” Rodgers said. He later added: “It’s a grind to get to this point, and that makes the finality of it all kind of hit you like a ton of bricks.”

Rodgers went 33-for-48 for 346 yards and three touchdowns, but this wasn’t exactly his best. He had one interception that Tampa Bay used to set up a last-touchdown before halftime and completed only two of nine attempts on goal-to-go situations. He threw for 151 yards in the second half, his average second half this season.

Rodgers laments his and Pack’s uncertain future

Familiar: Brady to play in record 10th Super Bowl

FROM PAGE 24

play for the 2003 and 2004 seasons, Brady owns a nonpareil six rings altogether. He’s headed to his 10th Super Bowl, and the big game will be played at Raymond James Stadium, which happens to be the Buccaneers’ home field. Add another record to Brady’s ledger.

“The belief he gave everybody in this organization, that this could be done,” says Bucs coach Bruce Arians of Brady. “It only took one man, and have a 278-429-1 overall record — faith was reborn in Tampa.”

Then they went 11-5 to become a wild-card team spending all of January on the road.

“Today, he is the most successful player in the NFL’s modern era. Even when he throws interceptions on three consecutive series, which he did Sunday at Lambeau Field, he and his team still find ways to win.”

That’s what Mahomes and his magic must overcome, and the Chiefs are early three-point favorites to do so. They come from the stronger conference. They win even when they aren’t at their best, as happened last week against Cleveland. That shrug off deficits the way Travis Kelce shrugs off defenders. They boast a confidence reminiscent of, well, the QB in Tampa.

And that guy is the most challenging obstacle to get past.

Playoff schedule

Wild-card Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 9
Buffalo 27, Indianapolis 24
Los Angeles Rams 30, Seattle 20
Tampa Bay 21, Washington 20
Sunday, Jan. 10
Baltimore 26, Tennessee 13
New Orleans 21, Chicago 9
Cleveland 24, Los Angeles Chargers 30
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 16
Green Bay 32, Los Angeles Rams 18
Buffalo 17, Kansas City 13
Sunday, Jan. 17
Kansas City 22, Cleveland 17
Tampa Bay 31, Green Bay 26
Super Bowl
Sunday, Feb. 7
At Tampa, Fla.

Tampa Bay vs. Kansas City

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, left, and then-New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady speak at midfield after a Dec. 8, 2019 game. Brady leads the Tampa Bay Buccaneers when they face Mahomes and the Chiefs in the Super Bowl.

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (12) evades a tackle as he looks to pass against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Sunday’s 31-26 loss.
The belief he gave everybody in this organization, that this could be done... It only took one man.

Bruce Arians
Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach, on quarterback Tom Brady

Considering that there has been no repeat NFL champion since the 2004 season, clearly some major obstructions have gotten in the way.

For the Chiefs, that hurdle wears a No. 12 jersey and is the last guy to pull off the feat. After demolishing Buffalo for the AFC title, the Chiefs head to Tampa looking to complete the double. It’s been done eight times, twice by the Steelers. But there’s never been such a gap for a repeat winner, and after winning its first Super Bowl in a half-century last year, Kansas City seems primed to end that string of failures.

Except for that massive roadblock named Tom Brady.

“The job’s not finished,” Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes acknowledges. “We’re going to Tampa, we’re trying to run it back.”

To do so, young Mr. Mahomes, you’ll need to beat that old man and his penchant for collecting trophies and rings.

“We’ve just got to be ourselves,” added Mahomes, at 25 a mere 18 years younger than Brady. ( Heck, Mahomes’ father is only 50 years old.) “I trust my guys over anybody.”

The rest of the world has learned to trust Brady over most anybody. The quarterback of the Patriots when they took the Lombardi Trophy six times in nine years, the 40-year-old is an 18-time Pro Bowl selection, nine-time All-Pro, three-time NFL MVP, four-time Super Bowl MVP, two-time league Most Valuable Player and Super Bowl MVP, plus five-time league Most Valuable Player and Super Bowl MVP.

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