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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Airman set self on fire in protest over Israel

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

An airman who set himself on fire outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington has died, police and Air Force statements said Monday.

Aaron Bushnell, 25, died after being transported to a local hospital, the Metropolitan Police Department said in an email. Bushnell in a live-streamed video appeared to douse himself in accelerant Sunday at 1 p.m. before igniting the fire.



Bushnell

Bushnell said in his video that he was protesting U.S. support for Israel's offensive against Hamas.

The person involved in the incident was an active-duty airman, Rose Riley, an Air Force spokeswoman, confirmed Monday in a statement. A military directory lists Bushnell as a senior airman.

Police are working with the U.S. Secret Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to investigate the incident, the police statement said Monday.

Metropolitan Police in an earlier statement said its officers had responded to the scene outside the Israeli Embassy to assist U.S. Secret Service officers and that its bomb squad also had been called to examine a suspicious vehicle. Police said no hazardous materials were found in the vehicle.

Bushnell's video was live-streamed on Twitch, which said it had suspended his channel for violating the platform's community guidelines.

SEE FIRE ON PAGE 3



Naval Information Warfare Center graphic

Artificial Intelligence experts are weary of using ChatGPT in the military but see value behind the program.

AI benefits, perils in military

Experts say ChatGPT has proved useful but may cause malfunctions

By EVA DOU
The Washington Post

Pentagon officials were hanging onto every word as Matthew Knight, OpenAI's head of security, explained how the latest version of ChatGPT had succeeded in deciphering cryptic conversations within a Russian hacking group, a task that human analysts had found challenging.

"These logs were in Russian shorthand internet slang," Knight said. "We had a Russian linguist on our team who had trouble getting through it. You know, a strong Russian

"There is a vast difference between pictures of cats on the internet and satellite imagery."

Rachel Martin

director of the Pentagon's Maven program

speaker. But GPT-4 was able to get through it."

The promises and the perils of advanced artificial-intelligence technologies were on display at a recent Pentagon-organized conclave to examine the future uses of artificial intelligence by the military. Government and industry officials discussed how tools like large language models, or LLMs, could be used to help maintain the U.S. government's strategic lead over rivals — especially China.

SEE AI ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Amazon added to Dow Jones Industrial Average

Associated Press

Amazon.com Inc. is joining the ranks of one of Wall Street's oldest and most exclusive stock indexes: The Dow Jones Industrial Average.

The e-commerce pioneer officially took its position among the 30-company Dow before the open of trading Monday, replacing drug-store operator Walgreens Boots Alliance.

S&P Dow Jones Indices opened the door to Amazon's inclusion in the Dow and Walgreens' exit to re-

balance the index in light of a 3-for-1 stock split by another Dow company, Walmart.

Seattle-based Amazon will share membership in the Dow with the likes of Apple, Boeing, JPMorgan Chase and Coca-Cola.

The Dow is a measure of 30 stocks of established, well-known companies. These stocks are sometimes known as "blue chips," which are supposed to be on the steadier and safer side of Wall Street.

Not just industrial companies

like Caterpillar and Honeywell, despite the name.

Apple, Intel and Microsoft are some of the newer-economy names currently in the Dow. Before Amazon, the most recent additions to the Dow were Salesforce.com, Amgen and Honeywell International in August 2020. They replaced Exxon Mobil, Pfizer and Raytheon Technologies, now known as RTX.

The financial industry also has a healthy representation with American Express, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase and Travelers.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Feb. 27)	\$1.06	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8804
British pound (Feb. 27)	\$1.24	Thailand (Baht)	35.89
Japanese yen (Feb. 27)	146.00	Turkey (NewLira)	31.1265
South Korean won (Feb. 27)	1298.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3768		
Britain (Pound)	1.2682		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3511		
China (Yuan)	7.1975		
Denmark (Krone)	6.8718		
Egypt (Pound)	30.9396		
Euro	0.9219		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8238		
Hungary (Forint)	359.13		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6430		
Japan (Yen)	150.74		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3077		
Norway (Krone)	10.5278		
Philippines (Peso)	56.06		
Poland (Zloty)	3.97		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3449		
South Korea (Won)	1333.33		

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

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.42
30-year bond	4.37

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



TUESDAY IN EUROPE



WEDNESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

US-led Kenya exercise novel mission for Somali soldiers

By BRIAN ERICKSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Army on Monday launched a series of military drills in Kenya, where an elite contingent of Somali soldiers will join a multinational exercise in their first mission abroad, U.S. Africa Command said in a statement the same day.

Somalis from the Danab unit, also known as the Lightning Brigade, are joining about 1,000 troops from 22 other countries for the annual Justified Accord exercise. Several U.S. Army deployed units are taking part in Justified Accord, including soldiers from the Massachusetts National Guard and the 2nd Security Forces Assistance Brigade.

Both the U.S. and Kenya have a shared interest in regional stability, and the exercise also will address real threats, said Lt. Col. Jason Porter, deputy chief of exercises at Southern European Task Force, Africa headquarters, which is leading the drill.

The exercise is also aimed at helping U.S. partners prepare for a range of contingencies, including humanitarian assistance operations, disasters and crisis response.

“Part of (Justified Accord) is making sure we’re building readiness,” Porter said in an interview ahead of the exercise.

Instability in Somalia has rippled into Kenya over the years, resulting in numerous high-profile attacks. In 2020, one U.S. soldier and two American contractors were killed when their base at Manda Bay, Kenya, came under attack by al-Shabab militants.

And in 2013, the militant group besieged a shopping mall in Nairobi, the capital, in an attack that involved grenades and small-arms fire, resulting in 67 deaths.

The inclusion of the Danab soldiers means the event will incorporate members of a unit integral to Somalia’s strategy for countering al-Shabab.

Building up the Danab also has been a focal point for AFRICOM and its special operations teams, which have been advising the commandos inside Somalia for many years.

“We remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Danab Brigade and other Somali security forces,” AFRICOM said. Despite international efforts to help Somalia neutralize al-Shabab, the terrorist group has proved resilient during its nearly 20-year existence.

In 2023, Somalia experienced a 22% increase in fatalities stemming from Islamic militant violence, reaching a record high of 7,643, according to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

The drill runs through March 7. It is the U.S. military’s largest exercise in East Africa.

Stars and Stripes reporter John Vandiver contributed to this report
erickson.brian@stripes.com
@BrianErickson_



Image from X

A still image from video shows Senior Airman Aaron Bushnell, moments before he ignited an accelerant fluid he poured over himself in front of the Israeli embassy on Feb. 25.

Fire: Act is second known self-immolation over war

FROM PAGE 1

A LinkedIn profile with a picture matching Bushnell’s other social media accounts says he was in the Air Force for almost four years, with a specialty in computer information systems.

Bushnell’s act is the second-known instance of self-immolation in America over the Israel-Hamas war. In December, a person set their body ablaze outside the Israeli consulate in Atlanta and used gasoline as an accelerant, according to Atlanta’s fire authorities. A Palestinian flag was found at the scene, and the act was believed to be one of “extreme political protest.”

In the video, Bushnell described his protest in similar terms.

“I will no longer be complicit in genocide,” Bushnell said in his video.

The war began Oct. 7, when Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis and took about 200 hostages. The Gaza

health ministry operated under Hamas says that more than 29,000 people have died in the ensuing Israeli offensive. The figure does not differentiate between fighters and civilians.

Bushnell’s death happened as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is seeking cabinet approval for a military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah while a temporary cease-fire deal is being negotiated.

Israel’s military offensive in Gaza has drawn criticisms, including genocide allegations against the country brought by South Africa to the International Court of Justice. Israel has adamantly denied the genocide allegations and says it is carrying out operations in accordance with international law.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.
lawrence.jp@stripes.com
@jplawrence3

Four charged in weapons transport that led to death of two Navy SEALs

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Four foreign nationals were arrested and charged Thursday with transporting suspected Iranian-made weapons on a vessel intercepted by U.S. naval forces in the Arabian Sea last month. Two Navy SEALs died during the mission.

The criminal complaint unsealed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Richmond alleges that the four defendants — who were all carrying Pakistani identification cards — were transporting suspected Iranian-made missile components for the type of weapons used by Houthi rebel forces in recent attacks.

“The flow of missiles and other advanced weaponry from Iran to Houthi rebel forces in Yemen threatens the people and interests of America and our partners in the region,” Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said in a news release.

U.S. officials said that Navy Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Christopher J. Chambers was boarding the boat on Jan. 11 and slipped into the gap created by high waves between the vessel and the SEALs’ combatant craft. As Chambers fell, Navy Special Warfare Operator 2nd Class Nathan Gage Ingram jumped in to try to save him, according to U.S. officials familiar with what happened.

“Two Navy SEALs tragically lost their lives in the operation that thwarted the defendants charged today from allegedly smuggling Iranian-made weapons that the Houthis could have used to target American forces and threaten freedom of navigation and a vital artery for commerce,” Monaco said.

Attorney General Merrick B. Garland pledged that the Justice Department “will use every legal authority to hold accountable those who facilitate the flow of weapons from Iran to Houthi rebel forces, Hamas, and other groups that endanger the security of the United States and our allies.”

Muhammad Pahlawan is charged with attempting to smuggle advanced missile components, including a warhead he is accused of knowing would be used by the Houthi rebels against commercial and naval vessels in the Red Sea and surrounding waters. He is also charged with providing false information to U.S. Coast Guard officers during the boarding of the vessel.

Pahlawan’s co-defendants — Mohammad Mazhar, Ghufuran Ullah and Izhar Muhammad — were also charged with providing false information.

Pahlawan’s attorney, Assistant Supervisory Federal Public Defender Amy Austin, said Pahlawan

had an initial appearance in U.S. District Court Thursday and is scheduled to be back in court Tuesday for a detention hearing. She declined to comment on the case.

“Right now, he’s just charged with two crimes and we’re just at the very beginning stages, and so all we know is what’s in the complaint,” Austin said when reached by phone Thursday.

According to prosecutors, Navy forces boarded a small, unflagged vessel, described as a dhow, and encountered 14 people on the ship on the night of Jan. 11, in the Arabian Sea off the Somali coast.

Navy forces searched the dhow and found what prosecutors say was Iranian-made weapons, including components for medium range ballistic missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles.

All 14 sailors on the dhow were brought onto the USS Lewis B. Puller after Navy forces determined the dhow was not seaworthy. They were then brought back to Virginia, where criminal charges were filed against four and material witness warrants were filed against the other 10.

According to an FBI affidavit, Navy forces were entitled to board the ship because they were conducting an authorized “flag verification” to determine the country where the dhow was registered.

Airman in stable condition after found in base pool

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — An airman with the 86th Airlift Wing remains hospitalized in stable condition after being found unresponsive in the base pool last week, Ramstein officials said Monday.

The airman was discovered in the water at the Ramstein Aquatic Center on Wednesday evening, a base spokesman said in a statement. Emergency personnel were contacted, and the unidentified airman was taken in an ambulance to Saarland University Medical Center. The airman initially was in critical condition, the base

statement said.

Base officials did not say whether a lifeguard was on duty or in which part of the pool the airman was found, citing the ongoing investigation. Whether the scare will result in any changes to policy or procedures will be determined after the investigation, officials said.

The Ramstein Aquatic Center has a 25-meter fitness pool with lap lanes and a deep area with a diving board. It also has a separate pool area for children with a depth of up to 3 feet and a water slide.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com
@stripesktown

MILITARY

Army officer breaks US spaceflight record

Colonel honored after being in space for 371 days

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army Col. Frank Rubio did not grow up thinking he would end up in space. It was something he gravitated to later in life.

“You kind of fall in love with the idea of, ‘Hey, I get to go out and explore space, do something really challenging and hard,’ ” he said. “[There are] few things where you can say my job represents humanity. And that’s a pretty powerful thing to be a part of.”

Rubio has been back on Earth for nearly five months and Thursday received the Army Astronaut Device, making him only the third active-duty soldier authorized to wear it, according to the service.

“The biggest honor for me about this badge is that, to me, it is the ultimate team badge,” he said. “You absolutely cannot get to space on your own.”

Rubio was in space for 371 days, which set the U.S. record for longest continuous spaceflight when

he landed Sept. 27.

Rubio graduated from West Point in 1998 and earned his doctorate of medicine from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., in 2010. Prior to attending medical school, he served as a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot and flew more than 1,100 hours, including more than 600 hours of combat time during deployments to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Prior to being selected by NASA as part of the 2017 Astronaut Candidate Class, Rubio was a surgeon for the 3rd Battalion with the 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Carson, Colo.

He spent two years training as an astronaut candidate to be a flight engineer and member of the Expedition Crew 68, according to his NASA biography.

Rubio, along with Russian cosmonauts Sergey Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin, launched Sept. 21, 2022, on the Soyuz MS-22 spacecraft from the Baikonur Cosmo-

drome in Kazakhstan to the International Space Station. He and his crew members were only supposed to be in space for six months. A coolant leak on the vessel required NASA and Russian space agency Roscosmos to send the three men a replacement spacecraft for their ride home, delaying the arrival of a new team of astronauts to relieve them.

During the mission, Rubio traveled more than 157 million miles, according to his NASA biography. He conducted three spacewalks, totaling more than 21 hours of space walking time.

“I will just say, clearly, we have an underachiever,” Army Secretary Christine Wormuth joked at a ceremony. “In all seriousness, Col. Rubio has a powerful U.S. Army story to tell. You are a stellar example of the Army’s core values and what it means to lead a life of service.”

Rubio told reporters after the ceremony that he will remain a part of NASA and hopes to fly



BILL INGALLS/NASA

NASA astronaut Frank Rubio is carried to a medical tent shortly after he landed in the Soyuz MS-23 spacecraft near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, on Sept. 27.

again in the future.

“Just getting on a rocket and being on 300 tons of rocket fuel is a pretty incredible feeling,” he said. “I got to fly with 28 other people in space. And given that there’s been a little over 600 human beings that have ever been to space, to fly with

that many and get to know them on a personal level up there, that was a pretty unique experience and something that I’ll always treasure.”

adams.matthew@stripes.com,
@MatthewAdams60

Former Navy women’s soccer player now an astronaut

By BILL WAGNER

The Capital (Annapolis, Md.)

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Nicole Aunapu Mann is unquestionably among the greatest players in Navy women’s soccer history. Now, her out-of-this-world performances carry new meaning.

In 2013, Aunapu Mann was selected as one of eight members of NASA Astronaut Group 21, achieving a dream set shortly after earning her wings of gold a decade before.

The California native is one of only two four-time, first-team All-Patriot League selections ever produced by the program.

Playing under her maiden name, Nicole Aunapu, also excelled in the classroom, being named a first team Academic All-American by the College Sports Information Directors of America in 1997 and 1998. She was twice selected as Patriot League Women’s Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

That drive and determination that made Aunapu Mann such a successful soccer player and midshipman at the Naval Academy has led to a distinguished post-graduate career. She received Marine Corps aviation as a service selection and wound up flying the F/A-18 Hornet.

Aunapu Mann logged more than 2,500 flight hours in 25 types of aircraft and 200 carrier landings, while flying 47 combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. She received two Air Medals, two Navy and Marine Corps Commenda-



BRITTANY TRUMBULL/Fort Novosel Public Affairs Office

NASA Astronaut Col. Nicole Mann operates the AH-64E simulator during training on Fort Novosel on Jan. 26.

tion Medals and two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals in recognition of exemplary service.

She graduated as a member of Class 135 from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School in July 2008. Col. Aunapu Mann made history in October 2022 when she served as commander of the SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft Endurance. She led an international crew of four astronauts that spent nearly six months at the International Space Station.

Aunapu Mann, who is registered with the Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, became the first Indigenous woman to launch into orbit. She conducted two spacewalks totaling 14 hours, 2 minutes.

Aunapu Mann’s journey began with a choice to play college soccer at the Naval Academy, in-

spired to cross the country by coach Carin Gabarra, a former All-American at the University of California, Santa Barbara and United States women’s national team member.

“I was always interested in serving in the military because I wanted to be part of something bigger than myself and serve my country. I also really enjoyed math and science, so those two elements are why I wound up focusing on the service academies,” Aunapu Mann said. “The final piece was Carin Gabarra, who was my idol as a kid. I watched Carin play soccer while growing up and had a poster of her on the wall of my bedroom. When I found out she was the head coach at the Naval Academy, it all came together.”

Aunapu Mann became an immediate starter at marking back

as a 5-foot-5 plebe. In those days, Navy employed a one-versus-one defensive scheme with a sweeper as a safety valve and Aunapu Mann’s job was to shut down the opponent’s best scorer.

“Nicole just had the mentality piece. Your job is to mark one person and the challenge is to see who is going to win that duel,” Gabarra said. “Nicole’s competitiveness and toughness were exceptional. She was a relentless defender who was also very good on the ball and could jump-start the attack after winning possession.”

Aunapu Mann was named Patriot League Defender of the Year as both a junior and senior. She was a four-time United Soccer Coaches All-East Region selection, earning second team honors as a senior captain.

Looking back, Aunapu Mann realizes how her time with Navy women’s soccer helped prepare her to become an officer.

“Being a member of the soccer team, you learn so much about peer leadership and working together to overcome challenges,” she said. “You win and lose together. As a young woman, I realized the Marine Corps was my next team.”

Aunapu Mann recently received significant recognition as she was among six former student-athletes to receive the NCAA Silver Anniversary Award. It honors former student-athletes for their outstanding athletic and professional achievements in con-

junction with the 25th anniversary of the conclusion of their collegiate careers.

“It was definitely a tremendous honor and a real privilege to meet the other awardees, many of whom I have heard of and have done some incredible things,” Aunapu Mann said.

Aunapu Mann returned to Annapolis this past fall to spend three days at the academy and spoke to the Navy women’s soccer team at that time. Gabarra calls her famous former player “an incredibly down-to-earth and humble person who is extremely well-rounded.”

Former teammate Anne Kipp Klokaw exchanged emails with Aunapu Mann while the latter was living and working aboard the International Space Station. Aunapu Mann had to exercise while in orbit and wanted a goal to work toward, so she and Kipp Klokaw agreed to do the Ragnar Trail Run in Zion National Park last spring.

Kipp Klokaw said every member of the Navy women’s soccer program from 1995-98 is “immensely proud” of what their former teammate has achieved. Aunapu Mann credits college athletics with helping her reach the rarified air of astronaut.

“There are so many similarities between the team I’m on now and the Navy women’s soccer team I was part of for four years. As a college athlete, I didn’t realize how powerful that was going to be,” she said.

MILITARY

Robotics warfare specialty deemed 'milestone' by Navy

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Navy on Thursday introduced a new enlisted specialty for sailors to operate and maintain current and future unmanned robotic weapons and vehicles.

The Navy established the new robotics warfare, or RW, rating for active-duty sailors who would be charged with planning and controlling robotic systems, which the service considers crucial to future war-fighting, according to a Navy announcement. The message described the new specialty's founding as a "major milestone" in the service's work toward building a

hybrid fleet of complementary manned and unmanned vessels and aircraft.

"This dedicated robotics rating will accelerate development of deep expertise in rapidly advancing autonomous technologies," the message reads.

Service officials said it was not yet clear how many sailors would serve in the RW rating. The Navy said it would start as "a small and highly selective rating."

Though the new specialty will be open to all sailors ranked E-4 to E-9, the Navy announcement said most chosen for the new job would come with experience in unmanned vehi-

cle divisions who have established robotics skills.

Those chosen for RW will join the new specialty after their current assignment is completed or when their current billet is converted to RW, according to a Navy fact sheet about the new specialty.

The Naval Education and Training Command is working to establish a training pipeline for future RW sailors, according to the fact sheet. The service expects to begin training recruits to serve as robotics warfare sailors by 2026.

The service intends to open up the specialty to Navy reservists at some time in the future, officials said.



TYRIN SAUNDERS/U.S. Army

An Arabian Fox MAST-13 unmanned surface vessel attached to U.S. Central Command's Task Force 59 conducts surveillance in the Persian Gulf on Nov. 21, 2023.

Those seeking to join the RW community should submit applications through the Navy's Career Waypoints, or C-WAY, system as soon as possible because "applica-

tions will be processed as they are received," according to the service.

dickstein.corey@stripes.com
@CDicksteinDC

AI: 'Language models don't get fatigued. They could do this all day.'

FROM PAGE 1

In addition to OpenAI, Amazon and Microsoft were among the companies demonstrating their technologies.

Not all of the issues raised were positive. Some speakers urged caution in deploying systems that researchers are still working to fully understand.

"There is a looming concern over potential catastrophic accidents due to AI malfunction, and risk of substantial damage from adversarial attack targeting AI," South Korean Army Lt. Col. Kangmin Kim said at the symposium. "Therefore, it is of paramount importance that we meticulously evaluate AI weapon systems from the developmental stage."

He told Pentagon officials that they needed to address the issue of "accountability in the event of accidents."

Craig Martell, head of the Pentagon's Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office, or CDAO, told reporters Thursday that he's aware of such concerns.

"I would say we're cranking too fast if we ship things that we don't know how to evaluate," he said. "I don't think we should ship things that we don't know how to evaluate."

Though LLMs like ChatGPT are known to the public as chatbots, industry experts say chatting is not likely to be how the military would use them. They're more likely to be used to complete tasks that would take too long or be too complicated if done by human beings.

That means they'd probably be wielded by trained practitioners using them to harness powerful computers.

"Chat is a dead end," said Shyam Sankar, chief technology officer of Palantir Technologies, a



JACOB BRADFORD/U.S. Army

U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Control Party specialists coordinate air support during Scarlet Dragon, an exercise changing military operations through adaptive data centric warfare and artificial intelligence integration, on Fort Liberty, N.C., on Dec. 7.

Pentagon contractor. "Instead, we reimagine LLMs and the prompts as being for developers, not for the end users. ... It changes what you would even use them for."

Looming in the symposium's background was the United States' technological race against China, which has growing echoes of the Cold War. The United States remains solidly in the lead on AI, researchers said, with Washington having hobbled Beijing's progress through a series of sanctions. But U.S. officials worry that China may already have reached sufficient AI proficiency to boost its intelligence-gathering and military capabilities.

Pentagon leaders were reluctant to discuss China's AI level when asked several times by members of the audience, but some of the industry experts invited to speak were willing to

take a swing at the question.

Alexandr Wang, CEO of San Francisco-based Scale AI, which is working with the Pentagon on AI, said Thursday that China had been far behind the United States in LLMs just a few years ago, but had closed much of that gap through billions of dollars in investments.

He said the United States looks poised to stay in the lead, unless it made unforced errors like failing to invest enough in AI applications or deploying LLMs in the wrong scenarios.

"This is an area where we, the United States, should win," Wang said. "If we try to utilize the technology in scenarios where it's not fit to be used, then we're going to fall down. We're going to shoot ourselves in the foot."

Some researchers warned against the temptation to push emerging AI applications into the

world before they were ready, merely out of concern of China catching up.

"What we see are worries about being or falling behind. This is the same dynamic that animated the development of nuclear weapons and later the hydrogen bomb," said Jon Wolfsthal, director of global risk at the Federation of American Scientists who did not attend the symposium. "Maybe these dynamics are unavoidable, but we are not — either in government or within the AI development community — sensitized enough to these risks nor factoring them into decisions about how far to integrate these new capabilities into some of our most sensitive systems."

Rachel Martin, director of the Pentagon's Maven program, which analyzes drone surveillance video, high-resolution satellite images and other visual information, said that experts in her program were looking to LLMs for help sifting through "millions to billions" of units of video and photo — "a scale that I think is probably unprecedented in the public sector." The Maven program is run by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and CDAO.

Martin said it remained unclear whether commercial LLMs, which were trained on public internet data, would be the best fit for Maven's work.

"There is a vast difference between pictures of cats on the internet and satellite imagery," she said. "We are unsure how much models that have been trained on those kinds of internet images will be useful for us."

Interest was particularly high in Knight's presentation about ChatGPT. OpenAI removed restrictions against military applications from its usage policy

last month, and the company has begun working with the U.S. Defense Department's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA.

Knight said LLMs were well-suited for conducting sophisticated research across languages, identifying vulnerabilities in source code, and performing needle-in-a-haystack searches that were too laborious for humans. "Language models don't get fatigued," he said. "They could do this all day."

Knight also said LLMs could be useful for "disinformation action" by generating sock puppets, or fake social media accounts, filled with "sort of a baseball card bio of a person." He noted this is a time-consuming task when done by humans.

"Once you have sock puppets, you can simulate them getting into arguments," Knight said, showing a mock-up of phantom right-wing and left-wing individuals having a debate.

Navy Capt. M. Xavier Lugo, head of the CDAO's generative AI task force, said onstage that the Pentagon would not use a company's LLM against its wishes.

"If someone doesn't want their foundational model to be utilized by DOD, then it won't," said Lugo.

The office chairing the symposium, CDAO, was formed in June 2022 when the Pentagon merged four data analytics and AI-related units. Margaret Palmieri, deputy chief at CDAO, said the centralization of AI resources into a single office reflected the Pentagon's interest in not only experimenting with these technologies but deploying them broadly.

"We are looking at the mission through a different lens, and that lens is scale," she said.

MILITARY

NFL cheerleaders raise spirits at base in S. Korea

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders visited the largest U.S. base overseas Friday to give troops and their families a morale boost as part of a five-day, USO-sponsored tour of South Korea.

Eight members of the squad first arrived at Camp Walker in Daegu city Thursday before moving onto Camp Humphreys, Camp Bonifas and Camp Casey, both near the border with North Korea.

The cheerleaders shared meals with soldiers, witnessed a reenlistment ceremony, performed cheer shows and hosted a youth cheer clinic with around 75 children at Humphreys.

Following the clinic at the John W. Collier Community Fitness Center, the cheerleaders put on a show for roughly 300 people. Clad in their iconic blue-and-white uniforms and accompanied by blaring rock music by AC/DC and Queen, they performed on a stage in front of the cheering crowd at the gym.

“We’ve got to meet a lot of amazing people and see what they do on a day-to-day basis,” Armani, a

four-year Cowboys cheerleader, said at the gym Friday. “It’s just been a very cool opportunity to meet the military men and women and their families.”

Active cheerleaders in the National Football League routinely identify themselves only by their first name.

McKenzie, a cheerleader also in her fourth season, said this was her first trip to South Korea.

“Our games and appearances back in Texas are more centered around the Cowboys, whereas this is centered around thanking the service members for their service and just providing some smiles and a little piece of home,” she said.

The Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders organization has made 85 USO tours, 39 of them in South Korea. The group made its first trip to South Korea in 1979, according to Shelly Roper-McCaslin, the organization’s special events and recruiting leader.

The former Cowboys cheerleader said she noticed the consolidation of U.S. bases since she last performed in South Korea in the early 1990s.

“The number of installations



CHRISTOPHER GREEN/Stars and Stripes

Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders hosted a youth cheer clinic at the John W. Collier Fitness Center at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Friday.



LUIS GARCIA/Stars and Stripes

Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders sign autographs during the event.

has decreased,” she said. “But what hasn’t changed are the really dedicated people doing a lot of in-

teresting and challenging work.”

Roper-McCaslin said performing in front of service members

and their families was “inherently different” from a stadium because the audience is “choosing to spend their time in the service and in so many cases uprooting their life and taking their family along with them.”

Air Force Maj. Jessica Hillard, who attended the youth clinic and dance show with her 7-year-old daughter, Reyna, said the events were “a good experience for the kids.”

“I think it’s pretty cool for them to take the time to come out and visit active-duty members and their families outside of the U.S.,” Hillard said Friday. “They seem very personable and friendly, and they want to be here.”

choi.david@stripes.com
@choiboy

Sailor’s son brings Filipino enlisted stories to small screen

BY KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

Born into a military family, writer-director Chris Soriano took inspiration from his father and other Filipinos in the Navy for his latest film, “The Master Chief: Part One.”

The 135-minute action drama began streaming Tuesday on Amazon Prime and Apple TV and tells the Navy story through the lens of the “Filipino mafia.”

Soriano also stars in the film as Gabe Rosario, a Filipino who joins the Navy to seek a brighter future but is met with racial tensions and other challenges. These include a villain inspired by Leonard Francis, the figure known as “Fat Leonard” behind a decades-long Navy contracting scandal.

Soriano, born at Naval Medical Center San Diego to Filipino parents, plays a character who manages supplies on a ship, he told Stars and Stripes on a Zoom call Friday. Soriano’s 20-year Navy veteran father, Gerardo Soriano, did the same job as a ship’s storekeeper.

“My dad would tell me a lot of stories when I was younger about Filipinos in the Navy,” he said. “Whenever I’d hang out with him and his buddies, I’d always hear people say the words ‘Filipino mafia’ as a joke.”

It wasn’t until Soriano became a filmmaker and was looking for a story to tell that he

thought about revisiting the subject.

“I dove into it and interviewed sailors and I asked them about their stories,” he said. “There were a lot of the jokes about secret funny meetings where food is exchanged, and it isn’t really nefarious like the mafia mafia.”



Soriano

His film does include a nod to “Goodfellas,” a film by Martin Scorsese about the infamous organized crime families. Scorsese is an influence on Soriano, who employs narration throughout his film.

Gabe and many of the main characters are enlisted sailors because Soriano wanted to show that side of the Navy.

“Movies like ‘Top Gun’ show the officer’s side in the military,” he said. “We don’t really hear too many enlisted stories. And what I’ve heard is that ‘chiefs run the Navy’; if this is a big thing, why has it not been showcased?”

Soriano said he was surprised to find that Filipinos have risen in the ranks, even to command master chief, the senior enlisted sailors who report directly to their commanders. The film’s end features a memorial to retired Command Master Chief Leopoldo Albea, a native Filipino who died in

2020.

“I used to think that to be at the highest you got to have a degree, where you have to bribe somebody or you got to do something to get there,” Soriano said. “But there are great people out there that just did it through hard work, and being a genuine good person.”

Soriano’s company, Albea Embestro Soriano, filmed in San Diego and on the USS Iowa, a retired battleship that’s now a museum near Long Beach, Calif. The company purchased Navy uniforms at a surplus store.

“I remember people were like, ‘What are you doing with 50 coveralls?’” Soriano said. “I was, like, ‘We’ll donate them back; we need this, we’re working on a production.’ They were so nice and said, ‘OK, you want boots; you need belts?’ So it really worked out.”

The film won the Jury Award for best drama feature on Nov. 18 at San Diego Film Week, which celebrates the local film industry.

Production for part two of “Master Chief” starts in the next 90 days, Soriano said. He hopes to release the film on Nov. 11, Veterans Day.

agee.kelly@stripes.com
@KellyA_Stripes



ALBEA EMBESTRO SORIANO

“The Master Chief: Part One” tells the U.S. Navy story through the lens of the “Filipino mafia.”

MILITARY

US, Japanese students become chess mates

American Navy base near Tokyo hosts tournament for some friendly rivalry

By JUAN KING
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL AIR FACILITY, AT-SUGI, Japan — An hourlong chess tournament pitted students from Shirley Lanham Elementary School at this base southeast of Tokyo against challengers from surrounding Japanese schools.

Despite a clear edge enjoyed by the Americans, the Japanese students are game to continue the friendly rivalry, said chess club adviser Jennifer Olson.

“It looks like a hit, and I think if these kids know that they can play next year that they might practice throughout the year to be able to come back,” she said during Friday’s event in Lanham’s library.

Forty-two students in second through sixth grade at Lanham and 10 schools in neighboring Ayase city competed in the three-round tournament.

“This is an informal tournament, as the Japanese students have just recently started playing chess,” Olson said.

The Japanese challengers were not dissuaded, according to Azusa Takahashi, a sixth-grader from Tendai Elementary School.

“This chess tournament event gave me an opportunity to get to know not only foreign kids but also Japanese kids who go to other elementary schools,” she said at

the event. “I was glad that Shirley Lanham Elementary kids tried to communicate with me using limited Japanese even though I couldn’t speak English better than I thought.”

The Japanese students were selected through an application process and appointed as ambassadors under the city’s exchange program, Ayase Friendship Kids, Olson said.

Each tournament matchup was limited to 30 minutes and each student kept track of their wins and losses.

No major prizes were awarded, but students received small gifts for their participation.

Japanese and American candy and snacks were given out at the event, and at the conclusion, Japanese students received a personalized certificate, erasers shaped like chess pieces and thank-you cards.

Tendai fifth-grader Tatsuaki Watanabe had learned the game only a week before the tournament but was enthusiastic for the competition.

“I am impressed that my opponents are good at it,” he said. “I tried to beat those opponents but couldn’t; I think I need some more practice to defeat them.”

king.juan@stripes.com
@juanking_17



PHOTOS BY AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

American and Japanese students compete in a chess tournament Friday, at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan.



No prizes were awarded, but students got small gifts for participating.



Ethan Meskimen, a fourth-grader at Shirley Lanham Elementary School, helps Tatsuaki Watanabe fill out a chart.

Bill proposes Coast Guard not punish sexual assault victims

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A yearslong cover-up of sexual assault at the Coast Guard Academy is prompting lawmakers to align the Coast Guard with other military services in protecting cadets and service members who report sexual abuse.

A proposed Senate bill would establish safeguards for victims in the Coast Guard and its academy and codify into law a new Coast Guard policy that ensures survivors are not punished for minor infractions, such as underage

drinking or curfew violations.

Congress in 2021 required all military services to implement a so-called “safe-to-report” policy but the Coast Guard, a branch that operates under the Department of Homeland Security and can transfer to the Navy in times of war, was omitted from the legislation.

“Survivors are now understandably afraid they’ll be punished when reporting cases of sexual misconduct,” said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., a co-sponsor of the new bill. “This legislation holds the Coast Guard Academy accountable by enshrining

safe-to-report policies and ensuring proper protections.”

Companion legislation was introduced in August in the House by Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn.

He said the bill affords cadets the same protections as other members of the military when reporting sexual assault and harassment.

Lawmakers have searched for ways to reform the Coast Guard after CNN revealed last year that the service concealed the results of an investigation into 102 cases of rape or sexual assault at the Coast Guard Academy from 1988

to 2006.

The six-year internal review, dubbed “Operation Fouled Anchor,” identified 43 alleged perpetrators and 63 victims and found the Coast Guard routinely dismissed serious sexual misconduct. Many alleged victims left the academy after reporting their assaults.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said it was “devastating” to think of how many more incidents went unreported due to fear of reprisals.

“Cadets and midshipmen at every other military academy are

protected by a ‘safe-to-report’ policy, and those at the Coast Guard Academy deserve those same protections,” he said.

The Coast Guard earlier this month announced a new policy requiring commanders to disregard minor offenses by victims or witnesses in sexual assault cases in hopes of encouraging reporting of such incidents. The misconduct can include breaching of school standards or policies for barracks and berthing.

shkolnikova.svetlana@stripes.com
@svetashko

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MILITARY

Army doctor arraigned in sex abuse case

Stockin faces charges that he molested 41 soldiers, veterans during medical appointments

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — An Army doctor was arraigned Friday in what investigators say is the largest military sexual abuse case on record but deferred on entering a plea until a later date.

Maj. Michael Stockin, 38, faces charges that he molested 41 soldiers and veterans during medical appointments at Madigan Army



Stockin

viewing for a total of 41 victims, in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice," said Michelle McCaskill, communications di-

Medical Center, the Army's second largest hospital.

"There are 47 specifications for abusive sexual contact and five for indecent

rector for the Army Office of Special Trial Counsel, which is handling the prosecution. McCaskill said allegations by one alleged victim had been withdrawn and dismissed after a review of evidence.

If convicted of all charges, Stockin could face a maximum penalty of more than 300 years in jail.

Flanked by a team of military and civilian defense lawyers at the courthouse at Joint Base Lewis-

McChord, Stockin answered "yes, your honor" to a series of questions by the military judge, Col. Joseph Babin. Babin is the senior judge in the Army's 6th Circuit, which includes JBLM. Stockin said through his lawyers that he would defer a plea on the charges until a later date.

His civilian lawyer, Robert Capovilla of Woodstock, Ga., wrote that Stockin would eventually plead not guilty during the months

of pre-trial motions prior to the scheduled start of his trial Oct. 7.

"We intend to fight against every single allegation until the jury renders their verdict," Capovilla wrote in an email.

Stockin, an anesthesiologist and pain management specialist, was assigned to Madigan Army Medical Center at Lewis-McChord in June 2019.

warnergary@stripes.com



Screenshot from Department of Veterans Affairs livestream

In this screenshot from video, Tanya Bradsher, deputy secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, watches on Feb. 22 as new headstones are unveiled for 17 Black soldiers buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.

Black soldiers executed for the 1917 Houston Riots receive new headstones

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — New headstones for 17 Black soldiers sentenced to death more than a century ago were unveiled Thursday at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio after the Army deemed their trials unfair and granted each an honorable discharge. During a ceremony to honor them, people dressed in the historic uniforms of Buffalo Soldiers, the nickname given to Black soldiers in some regiments beginning in 1866, lifted gold material from each of the headstones as the soldier's name was spoken aloud. They revealed a gray marble marker bearing the soldier's name, rank and home state.

The 17 soldiers honored Thursday were among 19 executed and 110 convicted of murder and mutiny in an event known as the 1917 Houston Riots or the Camp Logan Mutiny. The race riot occurred Aug. 23, 1917, as tensions between the Black enlisted soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, a Buffalo Soldier unit, and white Houston police officers and residents boiled over. It left 19

people dead.

After revealing the stone marking the grave of Pfc. Thomas C. Hawkins, his nephew Jason Holt knelt before it while holding the American flag that he received to honor his uncle's service more than 106 years after his death.

Holt, an attorney from New Jersey, has been working toward this day along with other descendants of the executed veterans, though he said he still questions whether it balances the scales of justice. His uncle was among the first 13 men who were executed in secret on Dec. 11, 1917 — one day after the guilty verdict was approved.

"How do we in 2024 understand what it was like to be a soldier in 1917 in Houston, Texas?" he asked the crowd gathered for the ceremony. "They did what they needed to do as soldiers to support our nation and come home and not enjoy the same freedoms that they were out there in various military campaigns protecting for each and every one of us."

All the men convicted were tried in three mass courts-martial at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. One attorney was appointed to

represent all 118 soldiers charged. It led the Army to significantly overhaul its court-martial system and require the president to sign off on all executions.

The executed men were first buried near Salado Creek, the location where they were hanged. Each was buried with a glass bottle with their name inside.

Eventually 17 men were reburied at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery with headstones bearing only their name and date of death. Two men's bodies were returned to their families.

The Department of Veterans Affairs placed a sign near the graves two years ago explaining the history of the Houston Riots, the impact the trials had on military justice and the reason for the unusually bare headstones.

Along with the new headstones, the VA also provided full military honors Thursday and presented a folded flag to each of the three families present.

Aside from Holt representing Hawkins, the crowd included descendants of executed soldiers Cpl. Jesse Moore and Sgt. William Nesbit.

Vietnam helicopter pilot's heroics earn him a 'long overdue' Silver Star upgrade

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A Vietnam veteran who in 1967 flew an unarmed Huey helicopter on multiple rescue missions that saved dozens of troops will be awarded the Silver Star at a ceremony next month.

The Army's decision to upgrade Larry Liss' Distinguished Flying Cross to the military's third-highest combat decoration comes after more than a decade of efforts to have the 82-year-old's heroics recognized.

"It's long overdue that we gather to honor the extraordinary bravery and selflessness of Captain Larry M. Liss, a true American hero," Rep. Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania, an Air Force veteran, said in a statement Thursday.

Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, will recognize Liss during a March 5 ceremony at the Valley Forge Military Academy and College in Pennsylvania, where Liss' actions on May 14, 1967, will be recounted.

The mission, known as the rescue at Cau Song Be, involved Liss and his co-pilot, Tom Baca, making repeated flights from a remote base into jungle terrain where friendly forces were surrounded by about 650 North Vietnamese. Baca, who died in 2020, also was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross. Enemy forces were poised to overrun a U.S. special operations outpost manned by roughly 100 South Vietnamese soldiers and a small group of Green Berets.

The impromptu mission was carried out in a helicopter used for VIP transportation rather than combat. During the mission, Liss stepped out of the Huey and fought the enemy with his rifle, while friendly South Vietnamese troops known as Civilian Irregular Defense Forces raced toward the aircraft.



Liss

In an interview with Stars and Stripes in September 2023, Liss said the deteriorating situation demanded that he act.

"(Enemy forces) were really

close, and I just saw this mess unfolding," he said. "So I got out of the aircraft and I helped them create the perimeter, and I engaged where I had to."

Liss and Baca were forced to fly in a jungle of tree branches and bamboo, weed-whacking the vegetation with their rotors to create a landing zone. The maneuver nearly rendered the helicopter unable to fly because of the damage it inflicted. Liss made numerous trips "despite the increasing danger with each lift," according to his Silver Star citation, which was issued by the Army on Jan. 11.

He ignored the continuously shrinking perimeter against an intensified enemy attack, leaping out of his seat "in total disregard for his own well-being and safety" to engage the enemy on the ground while rallying the troops and helping the wounded aboard the helicopter, the citation said.

The effort to get the Silver Star awarded to Liss involved a push by Pennsylvania lawmakers and Liss' brother Art, who spent years compiling a history of the events at Cau Song Be that included eyewitness accounts of those involved.

Art Liss' advocacy played a pivotal role in ensuring that his brother got the recognition he deserved, Houlahan said, adding that "Art's tireless efforts embody the spirit of dedication and love that binds our military families."

vandiver.john@stripes.com
@john_vandiver

EUROPE

Hungary votes to ratify Sweden's NATO accession

By JUSTIN SPIKE
Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Hungary's parliament voted Monday to ratify Sweden's bid to join NATO, bringing an end to more than 18 months of delays that have frustrated the alliance as it seeks to expand in response to Russia's war in Ukraine.

The vote, which passed with 188 votes for and six against, came as a culmination of months of wrangling by Hungary's allies to convince its nationalist government to lift its block on Sweden's membership. The government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban submitted the protocols for approving Sweden's entry into NATO in July 2022, but the matter had stalled in parliament over opposition by governing party lawmakers.

Unanimous support among all NATO members is required to admit new countries, and Hungary is the last of the alliance's 31 members to give its backing since Turkey ratified the request last month.

Orban, a right-wing populist who has forged close ties with Russia, has said that criticism of Hungary's democracy by Swedish politicians had soured relations between the two countries and led to reluctance among lawmakers in his Fidesz party.

But the vote on Monday removed the final membership hurdle for Sweden which, along with neighboring Finland, first applied to join the alliance in May 2022.

Addressing lawmakers before the vote, Orban said: "Sweden and Hungary's military cooperation and Sweden's NATO accession strengthen Hungary's security."

Orban criticized Hungary's European Union and NATO allies for placing increased pressure on his government in recent months to move forward on bringing Sweden into the alliance.

"Several people tried to intervene from the outside in the settling of our disputes (with Sweden), but this did not help but rather hampered the issue," Orban said. "Hungary is a sovereign country, it does not tolerate being dictated by others, whether it be the content of its decisions or their timing."

Last weekend, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators visited

Hungary and announced it would submit a joint resolution to Congress condemning Hungary's alleged democratic backsliding and urging Orban's government to immediately lift its block on Sweden's trans-Atlantic integration.

But on Friday, Ulf Kristersson, Sweden's prime minister, met with Orban in Hungary's capital where they appeared to reach a decisive reconciliation after months of diplomatic tensions.

Following their meeting, the leaders announced the conclusion of a defense industry agreement that will include Hungary's purchase of four Swedish-made JAS 39 Gripen jets and the extension of a service contract for its existing Gripen fleet.

Orban said the additional fighter jets "will significantly increase our military capabilities and further strengthen our role abroad" and will improve Hungary's ability to participate in joint NATO operations.

"To be a member of NATO together with another country means we are ready to die for each other," Orban said. "A deal on defense and military capacities helps to reconstruct the trust between the two countries."

Monday's vote on Sweden's NATO accession was just one matter on a busy agenda for lawmakers in the Hungarian parliament. A vote was also held on accepting the resignation of President Katalin Novak, who stepped down earlier this month in a scandal over her decision to pardon to a man convicted of covering up a string of child sexual abuses.

After accepting Novak's resignation, lawmakers are expected to confirm Tamas Sulyok, the president of Hungary's Constitutional Court, as the country's new president. He is set to formally take office on March 5.

Some opposition parties have said they will not participate in a vote to confirm a new president and have called for direct presidential elections. But Sulyok was nominated by Orban's Fidesz party, which has a two-thirds majority in parliament and is expected to easily approve his presidency.

A presidential signature is needed to formally endorse the approval of Sweden's NATO bid, which is expected within the next few days.



EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy answers questions in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Sunday.

Zelenskyy: 31K Ukrainian troops killed since Russian invasion

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action in the two years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

Zelenskyy said that the number was far lower than estimates given by Russian President Vladimir Putin's government.

"31,000 Ukrainian military personnel have been killed in this war. Not 300,000, not 150,000, not whatever Putin and his deceitful circle have been lying about. But nevertheless, each of these losses is a great sacrifice for us", Zelenskyy said at the "Ukraine. Year 2024" forum in Kyiv.

The Ukrainian leader said that

he wouldn't disclose the number of troops that were wounded or missing.

He also said that "tens of thousands of civilians" had been killed in occupied areas of Ukraine, but said that no exact figures would be available until the war was over.

"We don't know how many of our civilians they killed. We don't," he said.

It's the first time that Kyiv has confirmed the number of its losses since the start of Russia's full-scale war on Feb. 24, 2022.

Russia has provided few official casualty figures.

The most recent data from the Defense Ministry, published in January 2023, pointed to just over 6,000 deaths, although reports

from U.S. and U.K. officials put that number significantly higher.

A U.S. intelligence report declassified in mid-December 2023 estimated that 315,000 Russian troops had been killed or wounded in Ukraine.

If accurate, the figure would represent 87% of the roughly 360,000 troops Russia had before the war, according to the report.

Independent Russian news outlet Mediazona said Saturday that about 75,000 Russian men died in 2022 and 2023 fighting in the war.

A joint investigation published by Mediazona and Meduza, another independent Russian news site, indicates that the rate of Russia's losses in Ukraine is not slowing and that Moscow is losing about 120 men a day.

Ukrainian troops pull back as Russia's onslaught continues in eastern Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian troops have pulled out of a village in the east of the country, an army spokesman said Monday, as Russian forces display advantages in manpower and ammunition on the battlefield at the start of the war's third year.

The latest setback for Kyiv's soldiers was in the village of Lastochkyne, where they fell back to nearby villages in an attempt to hold the line there, Dmytro Lykhovii, a spokesman for one of the Ukrainian troop groupings, said on national television.

Lastochkyne lies to the west of Avdiivka, a suburb of Donetsk city that the Kremlin's forces captured on Feb. 18 after a four-month battle. The outnumbered defenders were overwhelmed by Moscow's

military might, and Ukraine chose to pull out its troops and mount a defense elsewhere.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said its troops had "liberated" Lastochkyne.

Russian state-owned news agency RIA Novosti quoted local commander Andrei Mordvichev as saying troops had pushed Ukrainian forces back by 6 miles and were continuing with their offensive. The agency said a key Ukrainian supply route ran through Lastochkyne.

It was not possible to independently verify each side's claims.

Though not in itself a major loss, abandoning the village illustrates the battlefield challenges Ukraine is currently facing.

The new phase of the war has brought some bleak develop-

ments for Ukraine.

Moscow's troops are driving on, smashing towns and cities with their superior firepower, despite suffering high losses of troops and equipment, Ukraine says.

Western analysts say the Russians are attacking in strength along four parallel axes in the northeast, aiming to press deeper into the Ukraine-held western part of the Donetsk region and also penetrating into the Kharkiv region north of it.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustan Umerov complained Sunday that half of promised Western military support to Ukraine fails to arrive on time.

That, he said, makes it hard to undertake proper military planning and ultimately costs the lives of soldiers.

NATION

Biden summons leaders for aid, funding meeting

By SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden will convene the top four congressional leaders at the White House on Tuesday to press lawmakers on passing an emergency aid package for Ukraine and Israel, as well as averting a looming government shutdown next month, according to a White House official.

The top four leaders include House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

During the meeting, the president will discuss the “urgency” of passing the aid package, which has bipartisan support, as well as legislation to keep the federal government operating through the end of September, said the White House official, who was granted anonymity to discuss a meeting not yet publicly confirmed.

The Republican-led House is under pressure to pass the \$95 billion national security package that bolsters aid for Ukraine, Israel as well as the Indo-Pacific. That legislation cleared the Senate on a 70-29 vote earlier this month, but Johnson has been resistant to putting up the aid bill for a vote in the House.

“This is one of those instances where one person can bend the course of history. Speaker Johnson, if he put this bill on the floor, would produce a strong, bipartisan majority vote in favor of the aid to Ukraine,” Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said Sunday on ABC’s “This Week.”

Sullivan stressed that Ukrainians

need weapons and ammunition to fend off Russian forces, and that in his personal conversations with the speaker, he “has indicated that he would like to get the funding for Ukraine.”

Separate from the national security package, the first tranche of government funding is due to expire Friday. The rest of the federal government, including agencies such as the Pentagon, Department of Homeland Security and the State Department, expires on March 8.

In a letter to his colleagues sent Sunday, Schumer said there was not yet an agreement to avoid a partial shutdown of the agencies whose funding expires this week. That includes the departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs.

“While we had hoped to have legislation ready this weekend that would give ample time for members to review the text, it is clear now that House Republicans need more time to sort themselves out,” Schumer wrote in the letter. The Senate majority leader called on Johnson to “step up to once again buck the extremists in his caucus and do the right thing” by greenlighting funding to keep the government open.

Johnson said Schumer’s letter was “counterproductive” and said Democrats were pushing their own unrealistic policy demands.

“This is not a time for petty politics,” Johnson said in a statement. “House Republicans will continue to work in good faith and hope to reach an outcome as soon as possible, even as we continue to insist that our own border security must be addressed immediately.”



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas testifies during a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Capitol Hill, in November in Washington.

Quick dismissal likely as Mayorkas impeachment moves to the Senate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For the third time in five years, senators will be sworn in as jurors for an impeachment trial. But the chamber is expected to spend far less time on the charges against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas than the ones brought against former President Donald Trump — or maybe no time at all.

The Republican-controlled House impeached Mayorkas by a single vote margin on Feb. 13, recommending that Mayorkas be removed from office over his handling of the U.S.-Mexico border. With two articles of impeachment, the House charge that Mayorkas has “willfully and systematically” refused to enforce existing immigration laws and breached the public trust by lying to Congress and saying the border was secure.

Democrats say the charges amount to a policy dispute, not the “high crimes and misdemeanors”

laid out as a bar for impeachment in the Constitution.

The 214-213 vote, a narrowly successful second try after the House had rejected the effort a week earlier, was the first time in nearly 150 years a Cabinet secretary had been impeached. And while the Senate is now obligated to consider the charges, Senate leaders have shown little interest in spending much time on the matter. Two-thirds of the Senate would be needed to convict Mayorkas, and not a single Democrat has signaled support for the impeachment push.

Still, there is a process that senators have to follow under the rules for impeachment, and all Democrats would likely have to stick together to dismiss the charges completely.

Under impeachment rules, a group of House managers — members who act as prosecutors and are appointed by the speaker — will deliver the impeachment

charges by reading the articles on the Senate floor, usually after making a ceremonial walk across the Capitol with the articles in hand.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has not yet said when that will happen, but it could be as soon as this week, when the Senate returns to session after a two-week recess.

Senators will later be sworn in as jurors, likely the next day. The Senate must then issue a summons to the official who is being tried to inform them of the charges and ask for a written answer. But Mayorkas would not have to appear in the Senate at any point.

After that, the rules generally allow the Senate to decide how to proceed. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., hasn’t yet said what he will do, but he is expected to try and dismiss the trial in some manner, if he has the votes.

Facing backlash over IVF ruling, Alabama lawmakers look for a fix

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Lawmakers began scrambling for ways to protect Alabama in vitro fertilization services after multiple providers paused treatment in the wake of a state Supreme Court ruling that frozen embryos could be considered children under a state law.

Facing a wave of shock and anger from the decision, legislators prepared separate proposals in the House and Senate that would seek to prevent a fertilized egg from being recognized as a human life or an unborn child under state laws until it is implanted in a woman’s uterus.

Justices ruled last week that

three couples who had frozen embryos destroyed in a mishap at a storage facility could pursue wrongful death claims for their “extrauterine children.” Justices cited sweeping language that the GOP-controlled Legislature and voters added to the Alabama Constitution in 2018 saying that the state recognizes the “rights of the unborn child.”

Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton, a Democrat, said Republicans helped create the situation in their push to enact some of the most stringent anti-abortion laws in the country. The result, he said, was eliminating a path for people to be-

come parents.

“At the end of the day, the Republican Party has to be responsible for what they have done,” Singleton said.

Former President Donald Trump joined the calls for Alabama lawmakers to act Friday and said he would “strongly support the availability of IVF.”

State Republican lawmakers said they were working on a solution.

“Alabamians strongly believe in protecting the rights of the unborn, but the result of the State Supreme Court ruling denies many couples the opportunity to conceive, which

is a direct contradiction,” House Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter said.

Republican state Sen. Tim Melson, who is a doctor, said his proposal seeks to clarify that a fertilized egg is a “potential life” and not a human life until it is implanted in the uterus.

“I’m just trying to come up with a solution for the IVF industry and protect the doctors and still make it available for people who have fertility issues that need to be addressed because they want to have a family,” Melson said.

House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels, a Democrat, introduced legislation to clarify that a “human

egg or human embryo that exists in any form outside of the uterus shall not, under any circumstances, be considered an unborn child” under state law.

“This is just the first step in unwinding this predicament our state has placed itself in,” Daniels said.

Melson said he was not surprised that the state is seeing unintended consequences from the constitutional language. Supporters said it was intended to block abortion if the states ever gained control of the issue. But opponents warned it was essentially a “personhood” measure that would establish “constitutional rights for fertilized eggs.”

NATION

Haley campaigns in Mich., absorbs funding hit

BY THOMAS BEAUMONT AND MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

TROY, Mich. — Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley says it's not "the end of our story" despite Donald Trump's easy primary victory in South Carolina, her home state where the onetime governor had long suggested her competitiveness with the former president would show.

Defying calls from South Carolina Republicans to exit the race, Haley traveled Sunday to Michigan, which holds its primary on Tuesday, speaking to a hotel ballroom packed with hundreds of supporters.

In the less than 24 hours following her Saturday night loss to Trump, Haley's campaign said that she had raised \$1 million "from grassroots supporters alone," a bump they argued "demonstrates Haley's staying power and her appeal to broad swaths of the American public."

But with Sunday also came the end of support for Haley's campaign from Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the powerful Koch network. In a memo first reported by Politico and obtained by The Associated Press, AFP Action senior adviser Emily Seidel wrote that, while the group "stands firm behind our endorsement" of Haley, it would



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley meets with a group of 5-year-olds at a campaign event, Sunday, in Troy, Mich. The state's primary is Tuesday, and Haley is staying in the race despite losing financial support from Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the powerful Koch network.

"focus our resources where we can make the difference," redirecting spending toward U.S. Senate and House campaigns and away from Haley's presidential bid.

"Given the challenges in the primary states ahead, we don't believe any outside group can make a material difference to widen her path to victory," Seidel wrote.

AFP Action had endorsed Haley's campaign in November, promising to commit its nationwide coalition of activists — and virtually unlimited funds — to helping her defeat

Trump. With his win Saturday in the first-in-the South contest, Trump has now swept every primary or caucus on the GOP early-season calendar that awards delegates. His performances have left little maneuvering room for Haley, his former U.N. ambassador.

"I have never seen the Republican Party so unified as it is right now," Trump said in a victory night celebration in Columbia.

Haley insists she is sticking around even with the growing pressure to abandon her candidacy and let Trump focus entirely on Democratic President Joe Biden, in a 2020 rematch.

At an event Sunday evening in Troy, Mich., Haley gave the roughly half-hour speech typical of her events, although she added a few touches specific to the Michigan audience. Calling Biden's incentivizing of electric vehicle programs "corporate welfare," Haley asked attendees in this state where the auto industry is a major economic driver about the unfairness of any requirement to switch to electric.

"What about the fact that maybe we all don't want to drive an electric car?" Haley asked the crowd, which affirmed her line of questioning. "Have you seen how expensive they are?"

McDaniel out at RNC as Trump moves to install loyalists

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel will leave her post on March 8, having been forced out of the GOP's national leadership as Donald Trump moves toward another presidential nomination and asserts control over the party.

McDaniel announced her decision in a statement on Monday morning.

"I have decided to step aside at our Spring Training on March 8 in Houston to allow our nominee to se-

lect a Chair of their choosing," McDaniel said in the statement. "The RNC has historically undergone change once we have a nominee and it has always been my intention to honor that tradition."

The move was not a surprise. Trump earlier in the month announced his preference for North Carolina GOP Chair Michael Whatley, a little-known veteran operative focused in recent years on the prospect of voter fraud, to replace McDaniel. Trump also picked his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, to

serve as committee co-chair.

The 50-year-old McDaniel was a strong advocate for the former president and helped reshape the GOP in his image. But Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement increasingly blamed McDaniel for the former president's 2020 loss and the party's failures to meet expectations in races the last two years.

In addition to McDaniel, RNC co-chair Drew McKissick said he would also leave.

Trump cannot make leadership changes without the formal backing

of the RNC's 168-member governing body, but McDaniel had little choice but to acquiesce to Trump's wishes given his status as the party's likely presidential nominee and his popularity with party activists. RNC members from across the country are expected to approve Trump's decision in March.

McDaniel was the committee's longest-serving leader since the Civil War. The niece of Utah Sen. Mitt Romney and a former chair of the Michigan GOP, she was Trump's hand-picked choice to lead

the RNC shortly after the 2016 election. Her profile as a suburban mother was also considered especially helpful as the party struggled to appeal to suburban women.

McDaniel easily beat back criticism from opponents within the MAGA movement to win reelection a year ago. But her opponents' voices are carrying more weight. The party is also struggling to raise money. The RNC reported \$8.7 million in the bank at the beginning of February compared to the Democratic National Committee's \$24 million.

Warm weather shocks some states

Associated Press

BOSTON — A powerful winter storm is expected to dump several feet of snow in parts of the West starting Monday while much of the central U.S. will be basking in unseasonably warm conditions. Windy conditions are also raising the potential for fires in several states.

The National Weather Service said Monday parts of the Oregon Cascades and Northern Rockies will see near blizzard conditions with one to two inches of snow an hour and winds reaching upward of 65 mph. It warned of dangerous travel conditions.

The storm will move into the

Great Basin and Central Rockies on Tuesday, carrying much colder temperatures and strong winds across the inner mountain West, said Andrew Orrison, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in College Park, Md.

"We'll be very wintry like for the next two days," he added.

Yet Chicago and many other cities across the central U.S. are getting an early taste of summer. The warm conditions were an extension of balmy weather over the weekend with temperatures reaching into the 60s in Denver, Chicago and Des Moines, Iowa. Kansas City, Mo., enjoyed temperatures in the mid-70s.

The sunny warmth brought Stacy Lawson, and her husband, Hugh Lawson, of Omaha, Neb., outside for a game of pickleball with friends.

The Lawsons and their competitors, Tim and Andrea Driscoll, had a hard time remembering the last year they were able to play outside in February.

"In Nebraska, February is both the shortest and longest month of the year," Tim Driscoll deadpanned.

While the warmer-than-usual temperatures may have provided a break from harsh winter conditions, it didn't come without concerns. The National Weather Service issued fire danger alerts in an area stretching across parts of 11 states.



MARGERY BECK/AP

Stacy Lawson, left, and her husband, Hugh Lawson, play pickleball outdoors in Omaha, Neb., on Sunday. Temperatures usually hover around freezing this time of year.

MIDEAST

Israeli air force strikes inside Lebanon kill at least 2 people

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The Israeli military said its air force on Monday struck targets of the militant Hezbollah group “deep inside Lebanon,” as Lebanese officials said targets were hit near the northeastern city of Baalbek. At least two Hezbollah members were killed in the strikes, an official for the Lebanese militant group said.

The strikes are among the deepest into Lebanon since the Israel-Hamas war began more than four months ago. They come a day after Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant vowed to step up attacks on Hezbollah even if a cease-fire is reached with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The strikes, which came shortly after Hezbollah said its air defenses shot down an Israeli drone, are likely to increase tensions along the Lebanon-Israel border as talks for a cease-fire in Gaza are underway.

In the afternoon, Hezbollah said it retaliated for the airstrikes near Baalbek by firing 60 Katyusha rockets toward an Israeli army division command in Syria’s Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The Israel-

li military confirmed that dozens of rockets were launched from Lebanon toward Israel on Monday afternoon.

Lebanese security officials said Israel’s air force carried out three airstrikes on the outskirts of the village of Buday, near Baalbek, targeting a convoy of trucks. Buday is a Hezbollah stronghold.

A Hezbollah official confirmed that three strikes hit near Baalbek. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters. He said the strikes killed at least two members of the group and that one hit a warehouse for food products that is part of Hezbollah’s Sajjad Project that sells to people in its stronghold at prices lower than on the market.

Hezbollah later released the names and photographs of two of its fighters without saying where they were killed. The latest deaths raise to nearly 210 the number of Hezbollah fighters who have been killed since the exchanges of fire along the border began on Oct. 8.

A Lebanese army soldier who was off-duty and at home was seriously injured in one of the strikes

near Baalbek, a Lebanese official with knowledge of the situation said. The soldier’s son was also injured, added that official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to share information with journalists.

The airstrikes near Baalbek occurred less than two hours after Hezbollah said its fighters on Monday shot down an Israeli Elbit Hermes 450 drone over its stronghold in a province in southern Lebanon. Another missile fired by Hezbollah toward the drone was intercepted by Israel, and landed near a synagogue in a town close to Nazareth in northern Israel. There were no injuries or damage.

The Israeli army said in a statement later in the day that its fighter jets struck sites used by Hezbollah in the eastern Bekaa Valley. It said they were in retaliation for Hezbollah’s firing of a surface-to-air missile at the Israeli drone.

The strike on Baalbek, because of its location deep inside Lebanon, is the most significant one since the early January airstrike on Beirut that killed top Hamas official Saleh Arouri.

Israel accused of blocking aid to Palestinians in Gaza in violation of court order

Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israel has failed to comply with an order by the United Nations’ top court to provide urgently needed aid to desperate people in the Gaza Strip, Human Rights Watch said Monday, a month after a landmark ruling in The Hague ordered Israel to moderate its war.

In a preliminary response to a South African petition accusing Israel of genocide, the U.N.’s top court ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza. It stopped short of ordering an end to its military offensive that has triggered a humanitarian catastrophe in the tiny Palestinian enclave. Israel vehemently denies the charges against it, saying it is fighting a war in self-defense.

One month later and nearly five months into the war, preparations are underway for Israel to expand its ground operation into Rafah, Gaza’s southernmost town along the border with Egypt, where 1.4 million Palestinians have flooded into in search of safety.

Early Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s

office said the army had presented to the War Cabinet its operational plan for Rafah as well as plans to evacuate civilians from the battle zones. It gave no further details.

The situation in Rafah, where dense tent camps have sprouted to house the displaced, has sparked global concern and Israel’s allies have warned that it must protect civilians in its battle against Hamas.

Also Monday, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh said he was submitting his government’s resignation. The move, which still must be accepted by President Mahmoud Abbas, could open the door to U.S.-backed reforms in the Palestinian Authority, which the U.S. wants to rule post-war Gaza but in a revitalized shape.

In its ruling last month, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to follow six provisional measures, including taking “immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”



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USAG YONGSAN

WORLD

Docs have 4 days to end Seoul walkouts



AHN YOUNG-JOON/AP

Doctors march toward the presidential office during a rally against the government's medical policy in Seoul, South Korea, on Sunday.

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Junior doctors in South Korea have four days to end their walkouts or they will have their medical licenses suspended and face prosecution, the government said Monday.

About 9,000 medical interns and residents have stayed off the job since early last week to protest a government plan to increase medical school admissions by about 65%. The walkouts have severely hurt the operations of their hospitals, with numerous cancellations of surgeries and other treatments.

Government officials say adding more doctors is necessary to deal with South Korea's rapidly

aging population. The country's current doctor-to-patient ratio is among the lowest in the developed world.

The strikers say universities can't handle so many new students and argue the plan would not resolve a chronic shortage of doctors in some key but low-paying areas like pediatrics and emergency departments.

Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo said during a televised briefing Monday that the government won't seek any disciplinary action against striking doctors if they re-

turn to work by Thursday.

"We want them to return to work by the end of this month, Feb. 29. If they return to the hospitals they had left by then, we won't hold them responsible" for any damage caused by their walkouts, Park said. "It's not too late. Please, return to patients immediately."

But he said those who don't meet the deadline will be punished with a minimum three-month suspension of their medical licenses and face further legal steps such as investigations and possible indictments.

Protesting farmers spray Brussels police with liquid manure near EU's base

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Farmers clashed with police in Belgium on Monday, spraying officers with liquid manure and throwing eggs and flares at them in a fresh show of force as the European Union's agriculture ministers met in search of ways to address the protesters' concerns.

The farmers are angry at red tape and competition from cheap imports from countries where the EU's relatively high standards do not have to be met.

Brussels police said that 900 tractors had entered the city, many bearing down on the European Council building where the ministers were meeting.

Smoke drifted through the air near where police in riot gear sheltered behind concrete barriers and barbed wire, firing tear gas and water cannons at the protesting farmers.

Scores of tractors also lined up down main roads leading to the

city's European quarter, snarling traffic and blocking public transport.

A few tractors forced their way through barriers, sending officers scurrying. Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden urged police to identify "rioters" who hurt people or disobeyed instructions from officers.

At the start of the month, a similar demonstration turned violent with farmers torching hay bales and throwing eggs and firecrackers at police near a summit of EU leaders.

The protests are the latest in a series of rallies and demonstrations by farmers across Europe.

On Saturday, French President Emmanuel Macron was greeted with boos and whistles at the opening of the Paris Agricultural Fair by farmers who claim that he's not doing enough to support them. Spain, the Netherlands and Bulgaria have been hit by protests in recent weeks.



SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market




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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man suspected in slaying of woman found in fridge

CA LOS ANGELES — A Minnesota man has been arrested on suspicion of killing a 31-year-old woman who was beaten, bound and stuffed inside the refrigerator at her Los Angeles apartment, authorities said.

The 41-year-old suspect, who was on probation for narcotics offenses, was taken into custody at his home in Minneapolis on an unrelated federal warrant, according to the Los Angeles Police Department. Officials didn't say what led homicide detectives to him.

The man has agreed to be extradited to California to face charges in the slaying of Maleesa Mooney, police said.

Officers found Mooney dead in downtown Los Angeles after her family asked for a welfare check because they hadn't heard from her. Blood was pooling under the refrigerator and the body inside was bound with electrical cords and clothing, according to a coroner's report obtained by ABC 7.

Death of beloved owl, Flaco, devastates fans

NY NEW YORK — Tributes poured for Flaco, the beloved Eurasian eagle-owl that became a feel-good New York story after escaping its Central Park Zoo enclosure and flying free around Manhattan.

Flaco was found dead on a New York City sidewalk after apparently flying into a building. It was a heartbreaking end for the birders who documented the owl's daily movements and the legions of admirers who eagerly followed along.

"Everybody feels the same, they're devastated," said Nicole Blair, a New York City artist who devoted much of her feed on the X platform to photos and memes featuring the celebrity owl.

Flaco sightings soon became sport. The majestic owl with a nearly 6-foot wingspan spent his days perched on tree branches, fence posts and fire escapes and nights hooting atop water towers and preying on the city's abundant rats.

Bill: Drivers may refuse to sign tickets, no arrest

GA ATLANTA — Georgia lawmakers are seeking to change state law to say that officers don't have to arrest people who refuse to sign traffic tickets after a church deacon died in August after initially refusing to sign a citation and struggling with an Atlanta police officer.

The state House voted 156-10 to pass House Bill 1054, which removes the requirement for a driver to sign a citation, allowing an officer to instead write that someone refused to sign and then give the driver the ticket.

Under the measure, people who



ALAN WARREN, THE (OWENSBORO, KY.) MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

Towing the tractor

Students Elijah Roberts and Kolyn Cruz, right, pull a John Deere 3032E tractor weighing 3,000 pounds across a course set up in the front lobby of Daviess County High School on Friday, to mark the end of FFA (Future Farmers of America) Week in Owensboro, Ky. Students could take turns during their lunch break and try and get the fastest time of pulling the tractor across the course.

refuse to sign citations would not be allowed to prepay the ticket and would be required to show up for court. A judge could suspend the driver's license of people who skip court dates.

Bill eyes defining woman, man based on ova, sperm

AL MONTGOMERY — Alabama lawmakers are advancing legislation that would strictly define who is considered female and male based on their reproductive systems. Opponents said the move could erode the rights of transgender and intersex people in the state.

"There are only two sexes, and every individual is either male or female," declares the Senate bill approved in committee.

It defines sex based on reproductive anatomy and said schools and local governments can establish single-sex spaces, such as bathrooms, based on those definitions.

The bill states that a female is someone who, barring accident or anomaly, has a "reproductive system that at some point produces ova" and male as someone who, barring accident or anomaly, has a "reproductive system that at some point produces sperm."

Feds: Japan crime boss eyed trafficking nuke item

NY NEW YORK — A leader of a Japan-based crime syndicate conspired to traf-

fic uranium and plutonium from Myanmar in the belief that Iran would use it to make nuclear weapons, U.S. prosecutors alleged.

Takeshi Ebisawa, 60, and his confederates showed samples of nuclear materials that had been transported from Myanmar to Thailand to an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration agent posing as a narcotics and weapons trafficker who had access to an Iranian general, according to federal officials. The nuclear material was seized and samples were later found to contain uranium and weapons-grade plutonium.

The nuclear material came from an unidentified leader of an "ethnic insurgent group" in Myanmar who had been mining uranium in the country, according to prosecutors.

Ex-Marine, crypto lawyer to challenge Warren

MA BOSTON — Republican John Deaton, a former U.S. Marine and cryptocurrency attorney, announced that he is challenging Democratic U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren as she runs for her third term in office.

Deaton, who was born in Detroit and recently moved to Massachusetts, released a campaign video highlighting his hardscrabble upbringing, his years in the Marines serving as a judge advocate at Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Ariz., and his career as a lawyer in

part representing mesothelioma victims.

Deaton cast himself as a fighter for the working and middle classes.

Deaton, a virtual unknown in Massachusetts politics, faces a steep climb against Warren, a former Harvard law professor who has twice won a Senate seat, but came in third in Massachusetts in her 2020 bid for president.

Ghost gun maker agrees to stop sales to residents

MD BALTIMORE — A leading manufacturer of ghost guns has agreed to stop selling its untraceable, unassembled firearms to Maryland residents under a settlement agreement announced by the city of Baltimore.

City leaders sued the company, Nevada-based Polymer80, two years ago "in response to the rapid escalation of ghost guns appearing on Baltimore streets and in the hands of minors," according to the mayor's office. Officials said the settlement grants the city all measures of relief requested in the lawsuit, including \$1.2 million in damages.

The suit accused Polymer80 of intentionally undermining federal and state firearms laws by designing, manufacturing and providing gun assembly kits without serial numbers to buyers who don't undergo background checks. It was filed the same day Maryland's statewide ban on ghost guns went

into effect in 2022.

Bill to let schools drop tax rates and still get aid

GA ATLANTA — Property tax rates could drop in some Georgia school districts under a House plan that would let districts with low property wealth continue to qualify for state aid even if they decrease property tax rates.

The House voted 161-12 for House Bill 987, sending it to the Senate for more debate.

The measure would let districts drop their minimum property tax rate to 10 mills, from the current 14 mills, and still be able to qualify for state equalization funds.

"This bill has the potential to lower property taxes for thousands of Georgia citizens across the state," said Rep. John Corbett, a Republican from Lake Park.

It's one in a series of measures that Georgia lawmakers are considering this year to reduce property tax bills.

The House also wants to increase the statewide homestead tax exemption, which would cut property tax bills for homeowners in some counties. The Senate, by contrast, is seeking to limit the future increase in homeowner property values, as assessed for tax purposes. Senators believe that move, in turn, could decrease future increases in property tax bills.

FACES

‘Oppenheimer’ on a roll

Oscar-favorite film claims top awards at SAG, Producer’s Guild events

Associated Press

With two weeks to go before the Oscars, “Oppenheimer” looks unstoppable.

Director and producer Christopher Nolan’s tale of the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the birth of the atomic age won the top prize Sunday at the 35th Producers Guild of America Awards — a frequent predictor of Oscar best picture winners — the night after doing the same at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

“Oppenheimer” won the PGA’s Darryl F. Zanuck Award for Outstanding Producer of Theatrical Motion Pictures over the same set of 10 nominees up for best picture at the March 10 Academy Awards, including “Barbie,” “Poor Things” and “Killers of the Flower Moon,” whose director, Martin Scorsese, was honored Sunday for his work as a producer.

The Zanuck Award winner has gone on to take the best picture Oscar for five of the past six years, and 12 of the past 15, including last year with “Everything Everywhere All at Once.”

Nolan thanked his fellow producer Charles Royen for giving him “American Prometheus,” the book that led to “Oppenheimer,” and “starting a chain reaction that’s spread all over the world.”

Earlier in the show, Robert Downey Jr. called it “the highest-grossing film about theoretical physics yet made.”

Downey on Saturday won best supporting actor at the SAG Awards, where “Oppenheimer” also won best ensemble, part of an awards season sweep that also included wins at the Golden Globes and Directors Guild Awards.



Gladstone

“Succession” and “The Bear” took the top television prizes at the PGA Awards after doing the same at the SAG Awards and last month’s Emmy Awards.

“Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse,” nominated for the animated feature Oscar, won the PGA’s animated motion picture award. Its predecessor, “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,” won the PGA award in 2019 before going on to win the Academy Award.

Scorsese joined Tom Cruise, Steven Spielberg and Kevin Feige as winners of the David O. Selznick award for an outstanding body of work as a producer of motion pictures.

The 81-year-old said he was

grateful for the privilege of getting to spend his life exploring “beauty that’s at the core of what we all strive to do.”

The most thrilling win at the SAG Awards went to Lily Gladstone for female actor in a leading role in Scorsese’s “Killers of the Flower Moon.” No category has been more hotly contested, with analysts evenly split between Gladstone and Emma Stone for “Poor Things.”

Murphy and Paul Giamatti (“The Holdovers”) have also been seen as in a neck-and-neck contest. But Murphy has now won at the SAGs, the BAFTAs and Globes, suggesting he has the clear edge heading into the Academy Awards.

The SAG wins of Downey Jr. and “The Holdovers” supporting actress Da’Vine Joy Randolph seem also to solidify their status as Oscar favorites.

The SAG TV awards went largely to the same shows that have cleaned up at the Emmys and Golden Globes: “The Bear” (best comedy series ensemble, Jeremy Allen White, Ayo Edebiri); “Beef” (Ali Wong, Steven Yeun); and the cast of “Succession.”

One exception was Pedro Pascal, who won best male actor in a drama series for “The Last of Us”



JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

Cillian Murphy, left, and Robert Downey Jr. show off their Screen Actors Guild acting awards Saturday for their roles in “Oppenheimer” at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

over a trio of “Succession” stars.

Elsewhere on the awards circuit, Celine Song’s quiet romance “Past Lives” won best feature and best director at the Film Independent Spirit Awards on Sunday, two of the event’s biggest. Other big winners were Cord Jefferson’s comedic satire “American Fiction,”

with Jeffrey Wright winning for lead performer; and Alexander Payne’s “The Holdovers,” which won prizes for Randolph and Dominic Sessa.

With a budget cap of \$20 million for nominees, the show celebrates films that sometimes go unheralded at the bigger shows.

Meyers in cozy groove as ‘Late Night’ turns 10

BY ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

Time flies when you’re hosting a late-night show four times a week. Seth Meyers admits it took a while to feel comfortable as host of “Late Night with Seth Meyers,” which is marking its 10th anniversary.

“It’s a journey everyone takes when you get a show like this,” he said recently in an interview over Zoom.

It took about six months to establish “a baseline of confidence.” Over time, he also decided to skip the late-night tradition of standing for an opening monologue in favor of sitting at a desk the whole show.

“Once people stopped seeing my legs, we turned a corner,” he jokes. He also wears more casual clothing instead of suits.

Meyers celebrated the show’s milestone on Monday’s episode with fellow “Saturday Night Live” alum Amy Poehler. In a conversation with The Associated Press edited for brevity and clarity, Meyers reflects on his show’s style, and his goal to reach 25 years working in the NBC building at 30 Rockefeller Center.

Associated Press: Why did you decide to stop wearing a suit on the air and to dress more casually?

Meyers: It seemed silly to wear a suit with no audience there (during the pandemic), so I was in casual clothes. Then when the audience came back, I just felt more in my own skin. Dressing more like myself allows me to be more like myself. And I don’t know if it’s permanent, but it is a nice feeling.

You often mention your writers by name during the show and bring them on. Why?

I probably still identify more with the writers than anything else, and I love being a part of a writing staff. Over the pandemic, when it was just the crew, you could blame a joke on a writer and get a laugh because they knew them. ... You’re showing people behind the curtain a bit.

You also have a very conversational interviewing style, with no cue cards. Does that lend itself to the kinds of guests you ideally want on the show?

There’s a tier of guests that all of us would take, and I’m sure you



AP

Seth Meyers is celebrating his 10th year hosting “Late Night with Seth Meyers.”

and I could both name those names. And then you have a chance to be selective in a way that you think reflects what your show’s DNA is. We’re always looking for those guests that are a little bit more offbeat or maybe just fit with my vibe better.

Will you be doing this job in 10 years?

I don’t know. I’ve tried in my career never to think that far ahead. I would like to do it for a few more years. I can’t imagine anything being more enjoyable than that. I’m coming up on 25 years at 30 Rock, and I’m pretty sure I will get a watch. Or maybe a nice pen.

‘One Love’ still No. 1 movie

From wire reports

For a second week, biopic “Bob Marley: One Love” continues to exceed expectations by claiming the No. 1 spot at the box office, overcoming two debut films and Sony’s “Madame Web” that’s still producing subpar numbers.

The Paramount film starring Kingsley Ben-Adir pulled in \$13.5 million during its second week of release. The project, which was produced for about \$70 million, already eclipsed that mark, grossing nearly \$72 million domestically in North America.

It’s an impressive achievement for the Reinaldo Marcus Green-directed Marley’s musical biopic that’s focused on the Rastafarian legend’s story during the making of his 1977 album “Exodus” while leading up to his impactful concert in his native Jamaica.

“One Love” drew nearly \$2 million more than “Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba - To the Hashira Training,” which placed No. 2. The latest installment in the Japanese anime series from Crunchyroll and Sony debuted with \$11.7 million.

“Ordinary Angels,” a faith-based Lionsgate film starring Hilary Swank, placed third with an

estimated \$6.5 million.

All three of those films outperformed “Madame Web,” which has struggled to find its footing. The superhero movie starring Dakota Johnson made just \$6 million in its second week and has a two-week total of \$35 million.

Other news

■ Actor and comedian Amy Schumer said she was diagnosed with Cushing’s syndrome, a relatively rare hormonal disorder that can change a person’s facial appearance and cause weight gain. Schumer’s revelation came after people noted online that her face looked “puffier” during an interview on “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” this month. The newsletter “News Not Noise” published an interview Feb. 23 in which the 42-year-old revealed the Cushing’s diagnosis.

■ Peter Anthony Morgan, lead singer of the popular reggae band Morgan Heritage that he founded with four siblings, died Sunday at 46, his family said. Their statement, posted on social media, did not specify a cause of death. The band won a Grammy for best reggae album in 2016 for “Strictly Roots.”

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Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher

Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer

Lt. Col. Katie R. Fidler, Europe commander

John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff

Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Pacific commander

Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

EDITORIAL

Robert H. Reid, Editor in Chief
reid.robert@stripes.comSean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.comAnn Pinson, Digital Managing Editor
pinson.ann@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erik Slaviv, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slaviv.erik@stripes.com

+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com

+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com

(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast

David Schultz, District Manager
schultz.david@stripes.com

xsscirculation@stripes.com

+49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

Europe

Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager
aquino.carlo@stripes.com

memberservices@stripes.com

+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003

633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

OMBUDSMAN

Jacqueline Smith

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OPINION

Texas shouldn't punish Black students for their hair

BY STEPHEN L. CARTER

Bloomberg Opinion

After Ronald Reagan's 1984 reelection landslide, his inaugural committee advertised for "attractive, clean-cut, all-American" performers to dance and sing at various celebratory events. The description ignited a firestorm on any number of grounds, not the least of which was race: Activists feared that the committee wanted no Black performers — in particular, that "clean-cut" meant not having distinctive Black hair.

That episode comes to mind in the wake of last week's decision by a Texas judge to uphold a public school's suspension of a Black student for refusing to trim his hair. The question before the court was whether the (aptly named) Barbers Hill Independent School District had violated a new state statute forbidding racial discrimination on the basis of hair. Because the district's rules address length but not style, ruled the judge, the statute isn't violated.

Where to begin? Perhaps with The New York Times' delightfully deadpan description of the hair in question: "locs, or long ropelike strands of hair, that he pins on his head in a barrel roll, a protective style that his mother said reflected Black culture."

What the Times calls "locs" were traditionally "dreadlocks" or simply "locks" — once a symbol of Black rebellion, later a flashpoint for arguments over cultural appropriation, and nowadays simply a way some people wear their hair. Black people especially.

Texas school districts seem to have gone out of their way to specify that locks are not acceptable, as the sociologist Patricia A. Banks notes in a recent analysis. And Barber Hills, intentionally or not, has plunged willy-nilly into one of the most complex and painful aspects of the nation's long, tortured history: attitudes toward Black people and their hair.

The nation's relationship to hair has always been complex. In her excellent book "Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America," the historian Kathleen M. Brown notes how during the 18th and 19th centuries, hair was thought to carry disease; keeping hair clean and groomed in public was a way to show that you were safe.

Black hair was considered especially dangerous, a fear often shared even by slavery's opponents. Brown tells us how the abolitionist Fanny Kemble despaired at the way that female slaves covered their children's "poor little woolly heads" with "half a dozen hot, filthy coverings." Kemble decreed that on her husband's plantation, at least, enslaved children would be permitted to wear hats only if their heads were shaved.

True, during the era of enslavement, hair-styling was one of the few areas in which most owners left their human property to decide for themselves. But what appeared atop the head remained a key marker of racial distinction. An 1858 article in a medical journal set forth differences between Black and white hair as evidence that the two races were separate species. In 1896, a Southern newspaper solemnly reported that African hair was curly to "deflect the rays of the tropical sun" and thus prevent "more severe penetration into the brain." Ten years later, W.E.B. Du Bois would publish "The Health and Physique of the Negro American," part of which was devoted to illustrating, with copious photographs, the enormous variety of black hair and skin. The report made no difference.

Yet although public display of groomed hair mattered, creating that look was a private matter, one almost of intimacy. Small surprise, then, that long after white shopkeepers yielded to the inevitable and began accepting the custom of the burgeoning Black middle class, white hairdressers and barbers refused. Thus

arose the tradition of Black-owned beauty parlors and barber shops. As late as 1953, the decision by an upstate barber to cut a Black child's hair, in defiance of the "unwritten law," made The New York Times.

In light of this sad history, how does Barbers Hill justify its rules? In the Houston Chronicle, the superintendent compared the district's hair requirement with similar rules for those who join the military. Service members, wrote Dr. Greg Poole, "realize being an American requires conformity with the positive benefit of unity, and being a part of something bigger than yourself."

Indeed they do. But the analogy fails. Service members today are all volunteers; they know what they're getting into. If Darryl George's family had sent him to a private school, whose dress and hair regulations they knew in advance, they'd have significantly weaker moral standing to complain. Instead, he attends a public school. That we have public schools is good; but let's not pretend the kids are present by choice. If they're forced to be present, they should also feel welcome.

Which brings us back to 1984. When the firestorm erupted, Reagan's inaugural committee quickly made clear that "clean cut" was not a euphemism for white but rather meant "someone who's cheerful and outgoing." The Washington Post reported that "a large portion of those selected were minorities."

In short, the group went out of its way to show how welcoming it was to those its rules appeared to exclude — not just in words but in actions. Forty years later, the Barbers Hill school district might consider following Reagan's example.

Stephen L. Carter is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist, a professor of law at Yale University and author of "Invisible: The Story of the Black Woman Lawyer Who Took Down America's Most Powerful Mobster." This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

It's fine that Haley's running a protest campaign

BY JIM GERAGHTY

The Washington Post

As expected, Donald Trump won the South Carolina Republican primary by a wide margin. As of this writing, the tally has Trump at 59.8% and Nikki Haley, governor of the state from 2011 to 2017, at 39.5%.

But Haley was never likely to win this state or the Republican nomination. She and her staff may not want to see her campaign more as a protest against Trump than as a viable bid for the nomination, but that's what it is — and there's nothing wrong with that.

There are plenty of Republicans who want an alternative to Trump — 49% of those who showed up for the GOP Iowa caucuses, a bit more than 45% in the New Hampshire primary. They're not a majority, but they're a large enough minority that they can't be ignored or dismissed.

Early in 2023, Donald Trump declared, "I am your retribution," and a spirit of nasty vindictiveness has permeated his campaign this cycle. A few days ago, NBC reported that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who dropped out of the Republican nomination race after Iowa, offered the utterly mundane observation that he didn't think Trump should play "identity politics" when picking a running mate. Chris LaCivita, a top Trump aide, sneered back on social media, "chicken fingers and pudding cups is what you will be remembered for you sad little man."

Seething and nasty even in victory, the Trump team has the attitude that now that they've won a majority in the first few GOP contests, it's time for Haley and everyone else in the party to kneel in acquiescence. Trump wants to make his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, the new Republican National Committee chair, and she recently said she thinks Republican voters would support having the political organization pay the former president's ballooning legal fees.

Haley is the candidate for all those Republicans who think the RNC should spend its money on, you know, electing Republicans.

When contemplating the poisonous-even-in-victory Trump campaign, I sometimes think of the former "Apprentice" contestant and Trump campaign surrogate Omarosa Manigault. In September 2016, she exulted: "Every critic, every detractor will have to bow down to President Trump. It's everyone who's ever doubted Donald, who ever disagreed, who ever challenged him. It is the ultimate revenge to become the most powerful man in the universe."

After less than a year of working in the Trump White House, the same Omarosa Manigault was singing a dramatically different tune in December 2017: "As the only African-American woman in this White House, as a senior staff and assistant to the president, I have seen things that have made me uncomfortable, that have upset me, that have affected me deeply and emotionally, that has affected my

community and my people." If only someone could have warned her that Trump might be an abrasive, spiteful, raging personality with less than perfect sensitivity to African Americans.

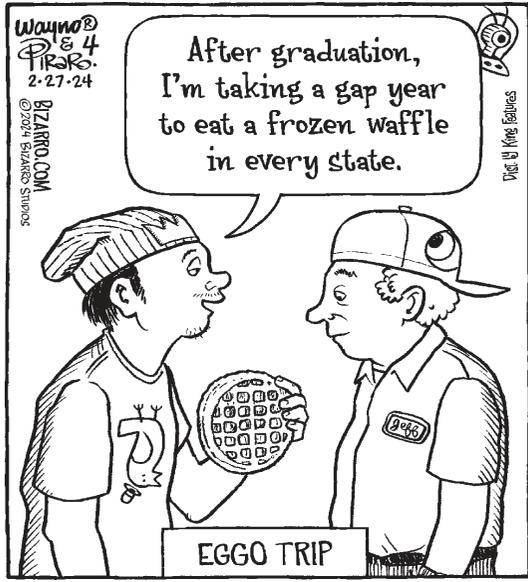
The Haley campaign loves to talk about her strength in a general election matchup against President Joe Biden, and sometimes the numbers are eye-popping. The latest Marquette Law School Poll national survey had 58% of registered voters supporting her and 42% supporting Biden. (The same survey showed Trump ahead of Biden among registered voters, 51% to 49%.) Even if Haley's lead were half that 16-point margin, she would win in a landslide and probably have considerable coattails down-ticket.

To Haley and many of her supporters, Trump is just a guy who repels at least as many voters as he attracts — and who got lucky with a uniquely unpopular opponent in 2016.

In the general election, one of two things will happen. Either Trump will win 270 electoral votes or he will fall short for a second time to Biden, at a time when even most Democrats see the incumbent as too old to run again. If Biden manages to prevail this fall, Haley and her fans will be able to say to Trump and his MAGA crowd, "See, we warned you." There's no downside for Haley to keep sounding that alarm in the coming weeks.

Jim Geraghty is National Review's senior political correspondent.

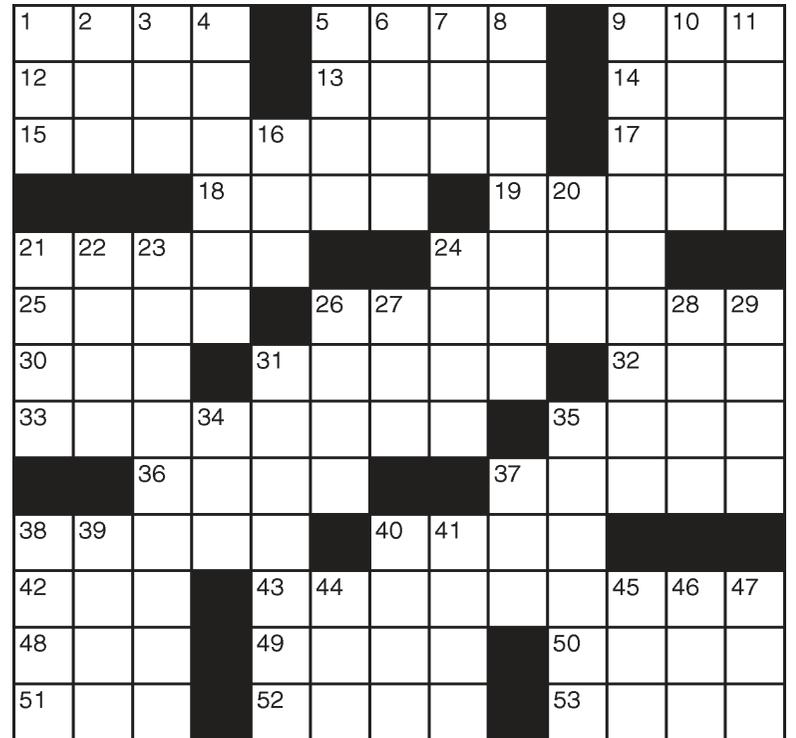
Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

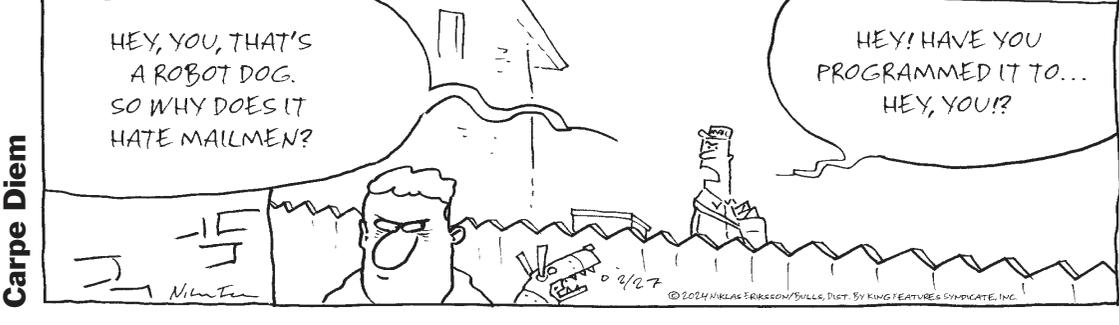
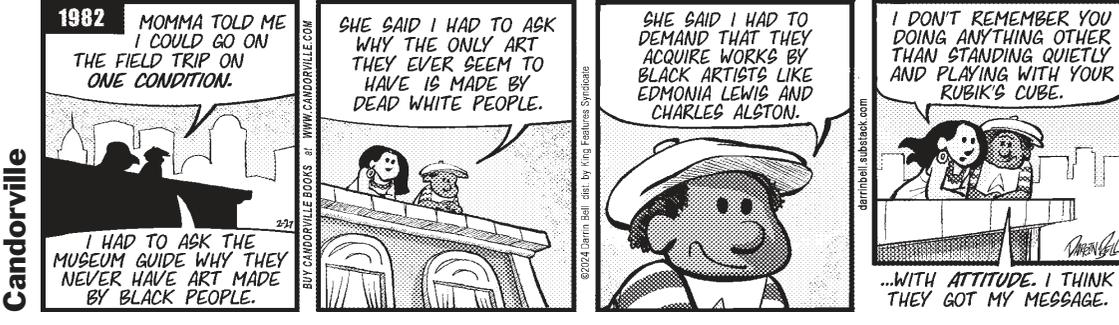
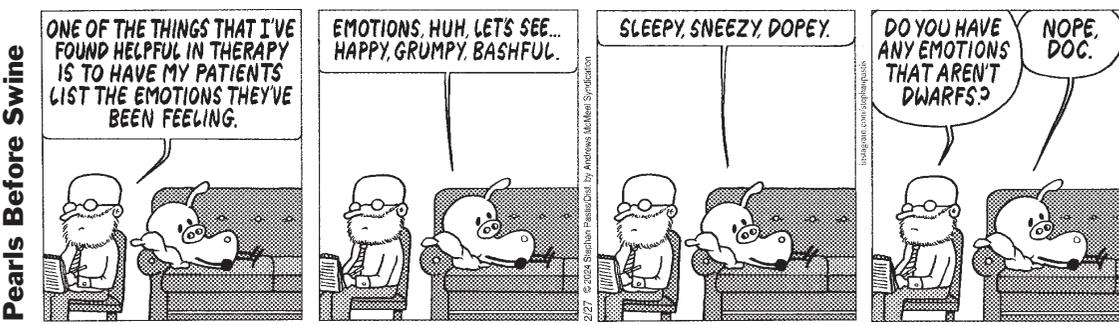
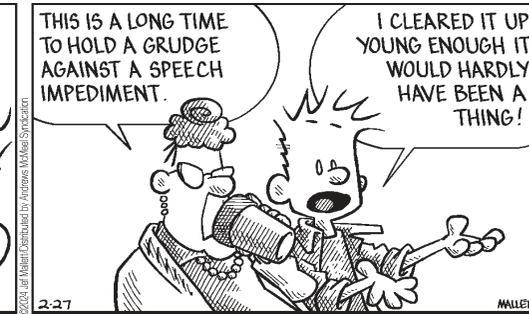
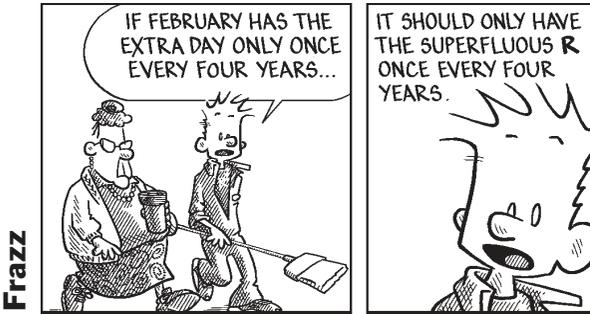
- 1 Volition
- 5 Melville captain
- 9 Beer container
- 12 "The Wire" actor Idris
- 13 Tire
- 14 "I love," in Latin
- 15 Windbags
- 17 Whitman of "Good Girls"
- 18 Gospel writer
- 19 Suit material
- 21 Remote locations?
- 24 Tiers
- 25 Roasting spot
- 26 Luminous larva
- 30 Series of battles
- 31 Appears
- 32 Asian language
- 33 Sarcastic bit of applause
- 35 Coop group
- 36 Dove calls
- 37 Exams
- 38 Fleeting
- 40 Curly cabbage
- 42 Tic-tac-toe win
- 43 PowerPoint diagram
- 48 Vichy water
- 49 Top-of-the-line
- 50 Bone-dry
- 51 Train lines (Abbr.)
- 52 Frog's kin

53 Bankrolls

DOWN

- 1 Entanglement
- 2 Under the weather
- 3 Wall St. deal
- 4 Wyatt Earp, for one
- 5 Off in the distance
- 6 "Listen!"
- 7 Annex
- 8 Gives
- 9 Lingerie items
- 10 Lawyer Clooney
- 11 Yuletide tune
- 16 Possesses a Londoner
- 20 URL part
- 21 Scatters seeds
- 22 Elliptical
- 23 Supremely fierce
- 24 Easy win
- 26 Hair products
- 27 Grazing land
- 28 Harangue
- 29 Green shade
- 31 Deride
- 34 Misery
- 35 Donkey sound
- 37 Patient's need, briefly
- 38 Dutch word for "farmer"
- 39 Lion's greeting
- 40 Coffee-growing area of Hawaii
- 41 Dumbstruck
- 44 Bathroom, to a Londoner
- 45 Coach
- 46 Free (of)
- 47 Super Bowl stats

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-27

CRYPTOQUIP

UXU MXHLS BFRX CZXGT
 YTYETFG HFTLBT LFB XV L
 ERN HLVMLG CZRST GRVNRVN:
 BZT ULRVBT F GRGBTFG.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A VERY LARGE COMPETITION AWARD WEIGHS FIFTY POUNDS, WHAT COULD YOU CALL IT? HEAVY MEDAL.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals N

SCOREBOARD/MLS

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Sunday's men's scores

EAST

American 66, Colgate 64
 Boston U. 82, Loyola (Md.) 79, OT
 Bucknell 54, Army 41
 Cleveland St. 73, Robert Morris 17
 Fairfield 88, Siena 64
 La Salle 84, Rhode Island 61
 Maryland 63, Rutgers 46
 Mount St. Mary's 72, Iona 65
 Navy 76, Holy Cross 66
 Rider 88, Quinnipiac 78
 St. John's 80, Creighton 66
 St. Peter's 69, Marist 60
 Wagner 72, LIU 57

SOUTH

Memphis 78, FAU 74
 N. Kentucky 80, IUPUI 64
 South Florida 79, SMU 68
 UAB 78, Tulane 67
 VCU 73, Saint Joseph's 69

MIDWEST

Marquette 88, Xavier 64
 Milwaukee 96, Fort Wayne 88
 Nebraska 73, Minnesota 55
 Ohio St. 60, Michigan St. 57
 Purdue 84, Michigan 76
 S. Illinois 65, Evansville 53
 Temple 72, Wichita St. 66, OT
 Wright St. 96, Oakland 75
 Youngstown St. 71, Green Bay 59

FAR WEST

Hawaii 73, Long Beach St. 65

Sunday's women's scores

EAST

Drexel 63, UNC-Wilmington 39
 Monmouth (NJ) 73, Coll. of Charleston 63
 Notre Dame 79, Boston College 55
 Stony Brook 2, Northeastern 0
 Syracuse 63, Pittsburgh 53
 Towson 70, Delaware 57

SOUTH

Alabama 87, Mississippi St. 75
 Auburn 57, Texas A&M 41
 Belmont 76, Murray St. 63
 Campbell 65, Hofstra 51
 Duke 69, NC State 58
 Georgia 76, Florida 60
 LSU 75, Tennessee 60
 Miami 56, Clemson 50
 NC A&T 77, Elon 46
 South Carolina 103, Kentucky 55
 Virginia 73, Louisville 68
 Virginia Tech 74, North Carolina 62
 Wake Forest 71, Georgia Tech 66
 William & Mary 66, Hampton 58

MIDWEST

Drake 79, N. Iowa 77
 Ill. Chicago 82, Valparaiso 59
 Illinois St. 78, Evansville 50
 Indiana St. 74, Bradley 67
 Iowa 101, Illinois 85
 Kansas 58, Kansas St. 55
 Loyola Chicago 64, Dayton 61
 Missouri St. 77, S. Illinois 42
 Ohio St. 79, Maryland 66
 Purdue 79, Wisconsin 55
 Saint Louis 83, St. Bonaventure 161
 UConn 104, DePaul 67

SOUTHWEST

Temple 75, Rice 66
 Tulsa 72, South Florida 65
 UTSA 76, FAU 60
 Vanderbilt 62, Arkansas 53

FAR WEST

Arizona 87, California 68
 Stanford 81, Arizona St. 67
 Utah 74, Southern Cal 68
 Washington 61, Oregon St. 51
 Washington St. 71, Oregon 61

TENNIS

Rio Open

Sunday
At Jockey Club Brasileiro
Rio de Janeiro
Purse: \$2,100,230
Surface: Red clay
Men's Singles
Championship

Sebastian Baez (5), Argentina, def. Mariano Navone, Argentina, 6-2, 6-1.

Men's Doubles Championship

Nicolas Pietrangeli, Colombia, and Rafael Matos, Brazil, def. Lucas Miedler and Alexander Erler, Austria, 6-4, 6-3.

GOLF

Mexico Open

PGA Tour
Sunday
At The Norman Course at Vidanta
Vallarta
Vallarta, Mexico
Purse: \$8.1 million
Yardage: 7,456; Par: 71
Final Round

Jake Knapp, \$1,458,000	67-64-63-71-265 -19
Sami Valimäki, \$882,900	64-67-67-69-267 -17
Stephan Jaeger, \$429,300	68-68-69-65-270 -14
Justin Lower, \$429,300	70-66-66-68-270 -14
C.T. Pan, \$429,300	71-67-67-65-270 -14
Robert Macintyre, \$283,500	71-66-65-69-271 -13
Patrick Rodgers, \$283,500	66-70-68-67-271 -13
Doug Ghim, \$220,725	67-71-67-67-272 -12
Chan Kim, \$220,725	66-69-66-71-272 -12
Andrew Novak, \$220,725	66-68-69-69-272 -12
Erik Van Rooyen, \$220,725	63-69-70-70-272 -12
Carson Young, \$220,725	71-67-68-66-272 -12
Tony Finau, \$145,125	69-67-69-68-273 -11
Maverick McNealy, \$145,125	70-70-67-66-273 -11
Henrik Norlander, \$145,125	65-71-65-72-273 -11
Ben Silverman, \$145,125	70-68-63-72-273 -11
Brandon Wu, \$145,125	71-67-66-69-273 -11
Alvaro Ortiz, \$145,125	67-64-73-69-273 -11
Jorge Campillo, \$99,549	67-70-67-70-274 -10

AUTO RACING

Ambetter Health 400

NASCAR Cup Series
Sunday
At Atlanta Motor Speedway
Hampton, Ga.
Lap length: 1.54 miles
(Start position in parentheses)

- (23) Daniel Suárez, Chevrolet, 260 laps, 47 points.
- (6) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 260, 52.
- (3) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 260, 40.
- (8) Austin Cindric, Ford, 260, 43.
- (18) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 260, 35.
- (27) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, 260, 35.
- (21) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 260, 38.
- (1) Michael McDowell, Ford, 260, 39.
- (7) Chris Buescher, Ford, 260, 28.
- (25) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 260, 27.
- (16) Harrison Burton, Ford, 260, 29.
- (12) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 260, 36.
- (32) Corey LaJoie, Chevrolet, 260, 24.
- (33) Kaz Grala, Ford, 260, 23.
- (28) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 260, 23.
- (20) Ryan Preece, Ford, 260, 21.
- (11) William Byron, Chevrolet, 260, 22.
- (26) Daniel Hemric, Chevrolet, 260, 19.
- (35) Carson Hocevar, Chevrolet, 260, 19.
- (31) Justin Haley, Ford, 260, 17.
- (34) John H. Nemechek, Toyota, 260, 16.
- (10) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 260, 15.
- (13) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 259, 14.
- (36) BJ McLeod, Chevrolet, 257, 0.
- (37) Erik Jones, Toyota, 256, 12.
- (4) Todd Gilliland, Ford, 256, 17.
- (17) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 255, 10.
- (2) Joey Logano, Ford, 252, 9.
- (14) Josh Berry, Ford, accident, 250, 8.
- (19) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, 243, 7.
- (9) Chase Briscoe, Ford, accident, 239, 8.
- (5) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, accident, 222, 21.
- (24) Brad Keselowski, Ford, accident, 218, 8.
- (22) Christopher Bell, Toyota, accident, 148, 3.
- (29) Zane Smith, Chevrolet, dvp, 75, 0.
- (15) Noah Gragson, Ford, accident, 66, 1.
- (30) Josh Williams, Chevrolet, accident, 2, 0.

Race statistics

Average speed of race winner: 115.402 mph.

Time of race: 3 hours, 28 minutes, 11 seconds.

Margin of victory: 0.003 seconds.

Caution flags: 10 for 65 laps.

Lead changes: 48 among 14 drivers.

Lap leaders: M.McDowell 0; K.Busch 1-10; K.Larson 11; K.Busch 12-15; K.Larson 16; K.Busch 17-20; K.Larson 21-22; R.Blaney 23; K.Larson 24; R.Blaney 25-33; K.Busch 34-40; M.McDowell 41; K.Busch 42-43; M.McDowell 44-50; R.Blaney 51; M.McDowell 52-63; T.Gilliland 64-98; J.Logano 99-102; T.Gilliland 103; J.Logano 104-112; C.Buescher 113; J.Logano 114-127; K.Larson 128-131; B.Keselowski 132; K.Larson 133-134; R.Stenhouse 135; B.Wallace 136-138; A.Cindric 139-165; T.Gilliland 166-169; B.Keselowski 170; T.Gilliland 171-182; M.Trux 183-184; T.Gilliland 185-186; M.Trux 187-188; T.Gilliland 189-192; K.Larson 193-198; M.Trux 199-201; M.McDowell 202-206; M.Trux 207; M.McDowell 208-209; M.Trux 210; A.Cindric 211-215; D.Hamlin 216-230; R.Blaney 231-232; K.Busch 233; R.Blaney 234-247; D.Suárez 248-255; R.Blaney 256-259; D.Suárez 260

Leaders summary (driver, times led, laps led): T.Gilliland, 6 times for 58 laps; A.Cindric, 2 times for 32 laps; R.Blaney, 6 times for 31 laps; K.Busch, 6 times for 28 laps; M.McDowell, 6 times for 27 laps; J.Logano, 3 times for 27 laps; K.Larson, 7 times for 17 laps; D.Hamlin, 1 time for 15 laps; D.Suárez, 2 times for 9 laps; M.Trux, 5 times for 9 laps; B.Wallace, 1 time for 3 laps; B.Keselowski, 2 times for 2 laps; R.Stenhouse, 1 time for 1 lap; C.Buescher, 1 time for 1 lap.

Wins: W.Byron, 1; D.Suárez, 1.
Top 16 in points: 1. K.Busch, 77; 2. W.Byron, 76; 3. A.Cindric, 76; 4. B.Wallace, 74; 5. R.Blaney, 69; 6. C.Elliott, 65; 7. D.Suárez, 64; 8. R.Chastain, 62; 9. A.Bowman, 60; 10. M.Trux, 60; 11. K.Larson, 58; 12. C.LaJoie, 57; 13. J.Nemechek, 53; 14. T.Gibbs, 50; 15. C.Buescher, 49; 16. C.Bell, 47.

PRO HOCKEY

PWHL

	GP	W	L	OW	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	13	5	2	3	3	24	32	29
Minnesota	13	5	4	2	2	21	26	25
Toronto	12	5	5	1	0	19	28	28
Boston	12	4	4	2	2	18	28	30
New York	12	2	4	4	2	16	28	26
Ottawa	12	3	5	0	4	13	28	32

Teams awarded three (3) points for a regulation win, two (2) points for an overtime or shootout win, one (1) point for an overtime or shootout loss, and zero (0) points for a regulation time loss.

Saturday, Feb. 24

Montreal 6, Ottawa 3	Sunday's game
Boston 2, Minnesota 0	Tuesday's game
Toronto at Minnesota	Wednesday's game
New York at Ottawa	Saturday's games
Toronto at Ottawa	
Boston at Montreal	

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Inter Miami CF	1	0	1	4	3	1
D.C. United	1	0	0	3	3	1
Charlotte FC	1	0	0	3	1	0
Columbus	1	0	0	3	1	0
Chicago	0	0	1	1	2	2
Philadelphia	0	0	1	1	2	2
CF Montréal	0	0	1	1	0	0
Cincinnati	0	0	1	1	0	0
Nashville	0	0	1	1	0	0
New York	0	0	1	1	0	0
Orlando City	0	0	1	1	0	0
Toronto FC	0	0	1	1	0	0
Atlanta	0	1	0	0	0	1
NYCFC	0	1	0	0	0	1
New England	0	1	0	0	1	3

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	1	0	0	3	4	1
FC Dallas	1	0	0	3	2	1
LAFC	1	0	0	3	2	1
Minnesota	1	0	0	3	2	1
Houston	0	0	1	1	1	1
LA Galaxy	0	0	1	1	1	1
St. Louis City	0	0	1	1	1	1
Sporting KC	0	0	1	1	1	1
Real Salt Lake	0	1	1	1	1	3
Vancouver	0	0	0	0	0	0
Austin FC	0	1	0	0	1	2
San Jose	0	1	0	0	1	2
Seattle	0	1	0	0	1	2
Colorado	0	1	0	0	1	4

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

Saturday's games

Columbus 1, Atlanta 0
 Los Angeles FC 2, Seattle 1
 Charlotte FC 1, New York City FC 0
 D.C. United 3, New England 1
 CF Montréal 0, Orlando City 0, tie
 Chicago 2, Philadelphia 2, tie
 Minnesota 2, Austin FC 1
 FC Dallas 2, San Jose 1
 Sporting Kansas City 1, Houston 1, tie
 Real Salt Lake 1, St. Louis City 1, tie
 Portland 4, Colorado 1

Sunday's games

Toronto FC 0, Cincinnati 0, tie
 New York 0, Nashville 0, tie
 Miami 1, LA Galaxy 1, tie

Saturday, March 2

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

Sunday, March 3

Toronto FC at New England

DEALS

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball American League
DETROIT TIGERS — Sent OF T.J. Hopkins outright to Toledo (IL).
SEATTLE MARINERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Trevor Kelley and INF/OF Brian Anderson on minor league contracts.

National League

NEW YORK METS — Placed LHP David Peterson on the 60-day IL. Claimed LHP Kolton Ingram off waivers from Detroit.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Agreed to terms with C Cam Gallagher on a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association
NBA — Suspended Miami Fs Jimmy Butler and Nikola Jovic and New Orleans F Naji Marshall for one game without pay and Miami C Thomas Bryant and New Orleans G Jose Alvarado three games without pay for instigating and engaging in an on-court altercation during a Feb. 23 game at New Orleans.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League
BUFFALO SABRES — Activated D Owen Power from injured reserve. Loaned D Kale Clague to Rochester (AHL).

DALLAS STARS — Loaned C Logan Stankoven to Texas (AHL). Assigned D Derrick Pouliot to Texas.

LOS ANGELES KINGS — Recalled D Jacob Moverare from Ontario (AHL).

NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Recalled C Kyle MacLean from Bridgeport (AHL).

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Recalled C Olle Lycksell from Lehigh Valley (AHL).

VANCOUVER CANUCKS — Reassigned D Jett Woo to Abbotsford (AHL).

SOCCER

Major League Soccer
NEW YORK RED BULLS — Added M Mohammed Sofu on a short-term loan agreement.



KYUSUNG GONG/AP

Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi dribbles the ball past Los Angeles Galaxy midfielder Edwin Cerrillo on Sunday in Carson, Calif.

Messi's goal helps Miami secure draw

BY GREG BEACHAM

Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — Anyone who thought Lionel Messi and Inter Miami would steamroll over the rest of Major League Soccer this year has already been proven wrong by the upstart LA Galaxy.

Messi was still brilliant enough to keep Miami unbeaten after an early season test from another marquee MLS club.

Messi scored in the second minute of second-half injury time off a pass from Jordi Alba, and Miami salvaged a 1-1 draw with the Galaxy on Sunday night.

Dejan Joveljic scored in the 75th minute for the Galaxy, who were close to delivering a surprising early season blow to Messi and his new MLS powerhouse — but with LA down to 10 men, the Argentine superstar worked another bit of magic.

After executing a give-and-go pass sequence with Alba, his long-time Barcelona teammate, Messi slid forward and chipped a shot into the roof of the net above Galaxy goalkeeper John McCarthy.

The goal delivered another thrill to the raucous crowd cheering on both teams at Miami's first road game of the season. Thousands of fans wore Messi shirts among the 27,642 in attendance — a record for a Galaxy regular-season match at their suburban stadium.

"It was their home opener, and the atmosphere was pretty electric," said Miami goalkeeper Drake Callender, whose eight saves included a stop on an early penalty shot from Riqui Puig. "It's still early in the season, so there's things we need to work on, but earning a point on the road is good. We don't want to get comfortable at all. We have a long season ahead."

Inter Miami is a major betting favorite to dominate MLS this season after uniting Messi and Luis

Suárez alongside fellow ex-Barca stars Sergio Busquets and Alba — but everybody on Messi's side knows it won't be easy.

Miami won its season opener at home last Wednesday, but was frequently outplayed by the rebuilding Galaxy four days later in Messi's first appearance against the club that once employed Inter co-owner David Beckham.

The Galaxy are famous for the type of high-profile veteran signings amassed by Miami in the past year, but the LA club is rebuilding without big names this time. The young Galaxy still applied more consistent offensive pressure than the league's new showcase team, racking up 23 shots to Miami's 11 while repeatedly generating chances in the box.

"Playing against fantastic players, it doesn't make you afraid," said Galaxy forward Joseph Paintsil, who was impressive in his debut. "It should give you a boost to be the best version of yourself. ... You can see we have really young and talented players in this team. We just need a little bit of time, because we just arrived."

Miami responded to the Galaxy's attack with physical defense, but couldn't put together a consistent response despite Messi's playmaking. Puig — a product of Barca's famed La Masia academy — was his usual excellent self in midfield for the Galaxy, while newcomers Paintsil — who drew the early penalty with a canny run past Busquets — and Gabriel Pec made immediate impacts in their debuts.

"It's true, they dominated the first half," Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said. "Puig made them play very well, and it's clear that (with) their two new players, the team is totally different because they have a good No. 9 and two wingers who are dangerous. They played a good game."

SPORTS BRIEFS/NHL

BRIEFLY

Awarding of medals still on hold

Associated Press

GENEVA — Four appeals filed at sport's highest court in the fall-out from the doping case of Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva are set to delay awarding medals from the 2022 Beijing Olympics yet again.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said Monday it registered three appeals from Russia and one from Canada, to challenge how the International Skating Union amended the result of the team event held two years ago in Beijing because the court disqualified Valieva one month ago.

"Given the early stage of the proceedings, no indication can be given as to when a hearing may take place, if any," the court said in a statement.

The separate Russian appeals from the national Olympic body, the national skating federation, and the skaters including Valieva ask the court to reinstate their team as gold medalists.

The single Canadian appeal seeks to get bronze medals ahead of the Russians, who the ISU downgraded to third place instead of fourth once it had removed Valieva's points scores.

The ISU removed the Russians from first place and upgraded the United States as champions and Japan into second place.

Controversy and promises of further appeals to CAS followed the skating body's interpretation of its own competition rules. The ISU removed Valieva's points — a maximum 10 for her team in each of the short program and free skate — but did not add a point to the tally of other teams who subsequently rose in the event standings.

The ISU's reordering of team points totals left fourth-place Canada one point behind the Russians. The Canadians believe they should be one point ahead in third place with extra scores added to take account of Valieva's removal.

McKennie likely to miss national team games

TURIN, Italy — American midfielder Weston McKennie will likely miss the CONCACAF Nations League finals next month after dislocating his left shoulder.

McKennie was injured while playing for Juventus on Sunday after landing awkwardly.

McKennie is a key member of the United States national team and the Americans face Jamaica in the Nations League semifinals on March 21 at AT&T Stadium, with the final three days later.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference									
Atlantic Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Boston	59	34	12	13	81	199	161		
Florida	58	38	16	4	80	191	140		
Toronto	57	33	16	8	74	214	179		
Detroit	58	32	20	6	70	205	183		
Tampa Bay	60	32	23	5	69	206	201		
Buffalo	58	27	27	4	58	169	175		
Ottawa	55	25	27	3	53	186	193		
Montreal	58	22	28	8	52	163	209		

Metropolitan Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
N.Y. Rangers	59	39	17	3	81	197	163		
Carolina	58	34	18	6	74	191	163		
Philadelphia	59	30	22	7	67	177	175		
New Jersey	58	29	25	4	62	191	203		
Washington	56	26	21	9	61	144	175		
Pittsburgh	55	26	21	8	60	166	151		
N.Y. Islanders	57	23	20	14	60	167	195		
Columbus	57	19	28	10	48	170	210		

Western Conference									
Central Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Dallas	59	35	16	8	78	215	179		
Winnipeg	56	36	15	5	77	172	133		
Colorado	59	35	19	5	75	216	188		
Nashville	59	32	25	2	66	184	187		
St. Louis	57	30	25	2	62	167	178		
Minnesota	58	28	24	6	62	186	193		
Arizona	57	23	29	5	51	166	188		
Chicago	59	15	39	5	35	123	208		

Pacific Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Vancouver	60	38	16	6	82	218	166		
Vegas	58	32	19	7	71	186	165		
Edmonton	55	33	20	2	68	197	166		
Los Angeles	56	29	17	10	68	174	152		
Calgary	58	28	25	5	61	181	182		
Seattle	57	24	22	11	59	159	166		
Anaheim	58	20	35	3	43	151	207		
San Jose	56	15	36	5	35	118	215		

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

Saturday's games

Detroit 6, St. Louis 1
 New Jersey 4, Montreal 3
 Tampa Bay 4, N.Y. Islanders 2
 N.Y. Rangers 2, Philadelphia 1
 Florida 3, Washington 2, OT
 Toronto 4, Colorado 3
 Ottawa 4, Vegas 3, SO
 Vancouver 3, Boston 2, OT
 Dallas 2, Carolina 1
 Nashville 4, San Jose 2
 Minnesota 5, Seattle 2
 Calgary 6, Edmonton 3
 Los Angeles 3, Anaheim 2, SO

Sunday's games

Tampa Bay 4, New Jersey 1
 Pittsburgh 7, Philadelphia 6
 Winnipeg 4, Arizona 3, OT
 Detroit 3, Chicago 2, OT
 Buffalo 3, Carolina 2, SO
 Columbus 4, N.Y. Rangers 2
 Nashville 4, Anaheim 2

Monday's games

Ottawa at Washington
 N.Y. Islanders at Dallas
 Los Angeles at Edmonton
 Boston at Seattle

Tuesday's games

Arizona at Montreal
 Buffalo at Florida
 Tampa Bay at Philadelphia
 Vegas at Toronto
 Washington at Detroit
 Carolina at Minnesota
 Ottawa at Nashville
 St. Louis at Winnipeg
 Los Angeles at Calgary
 Dallas at Colorado
 Pittsburgh at Vancouver
 New Jersey at San Jose

Wednesday's games

Columbus at N.Y. Rangers
 St. Louis at Edmonton

Thursday's games

Arizona at Toronto
 Buffalo at Tampa Bay
 Carolina at Columbus
 Montreal at Florida
 N.Y. Islanders at Detroit
 Vegas at Boston
 Minnesota at Nashville
 Winnipeg at Dallas
 Colorado at Chicago
 Los Angeles at Vancouver
 Pittsburgh at Seattle
 Anaheim at San Jose

Calendar

March 8 — Trade deadline.
 April 18 — End of regular season.
 April 22 — Start of Stanley Cup playoffs.

NHL ROUNDUP

Rangers' winning streak snapped at 10 by Jackets

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Jack Roslovic scored a tiebreaking goal in the second period to lift the Columbus Blue Jackets to a 4-2 victory over New York on Sunday night, snapping the Rangers' franchise record-tying 10-game winning streak.

Dmitri Voronkov and Kirill Marchenko each had a goal and an assist, Ivan Provorov also scored, and Johnny Gaudreau had two assists for Columbus, which had lost three straight at home. Elvis Merzlikins stopped 38 shots as the Blue Jackets won the opener of the teams' home-and-home set that concludes Wednesday in New York.

"We played a real smart hockey game," Blue Jackets coach Pascal Vincent said. "Their transition game is so good. They use the full length of the ice in the offensive zone. Our guys were ready."

Artemi Panarin and Adam Edstrom scored, and Jonathan Quick stopped 37 shots for the Rangers, who lost for the first time since Jan. 26. They still lead the Metropolitan Division with 81 points — seven ahead of second-place Carolina.

"They came at us with a lot of speed," Rangers coach Peter Laviolette said. "They'd get behind us with odd-man rushes. It wasn't one or two — it was too many — and we couldn't capitalize at the other end. That was the difference in the game."

Red Wings 3, Blackhawks 2 (OT): Patrick Kane scored on a breakaway 1:43 into overtime in his return to Chicago, lifting Detroit to its fifth straight win.

Kane was all alone when he got the puck before skating in and beating Petr Mrazek for his 12th goal. The dynamic winger then held his arms in the air as the United Center crowd cheered.

Daniel Sprong and Alex DeBrincat scored for the Red Wings, and James Reimer had 33 saves.

Kane starred for the Blackhawks for 16 seasons before he was traded to the New York Rangers a year ago. He signed with Detroit as a free agent and was repeatedly saluted with raucous cheers from a season-high crowd of 21,141 in his first game against his first NHL team. Kane's Chicago homecoming coincided with the Blackhawks retiring Hall of Fame defenseman Chris Chelios' No. 7 jersey in a pregame ceremony.

Nick Foligno and MacKenzie Entwistle scored for last-place Chicago.



PAUL VERNON/AP

Blue Jackets forward Jack Roslovic, center, celebrates after his goal against the Rangers with teammates forward Johnny Gaudreau, left, and forward Boone Jenner during the second period Sunday.

Penguins 7, Flyers 6: Drew O'Connor and Rickard Rakell scored less than two minutes apart in the third period to break open a tie game and host Pittsburgh held on to beat Philadelphia.

Sidney Crosby had a goal and three assists to give him 129 points (55 goals, 74 assists) in 87 regular-season games against the Flyers, the most by any opponent against Philadelphia. Bryan Rust had two goals and an assist for the Penguins before exiting in the third period with an injury.

Emil Bemstrom picked up a goal in his first game with the Penguins. Kris Letang added an insurance goal late after Philadelphia's Cam York trimmed Pittsburgh's lead to one.

Travis Sanheim and Tyson Foerster had two goals each for Philadelphia. Scott Laughton added his eighth on the Flyers' NHL-leading 14th short-handed goal of the season.

Jets 4, Coyotes 3 (OT): Kyle Connor scored his second goal of the game on a 3-on-1 break in overtime as host Winnipeg handed Arizona its 12th straight loss.

Connor scored from the right side after two Arizona players fell deep in the other end of the ice after a failed breakaway attempt.

Mark Scheifele had a goal and three assists, Gabriel Vilardi also scored and Josh Morrissey had three assists to help Winnipeg improve to 36-15-5 with its third straight victory and sixth in seven games.

Sabres 3, Hurricanes 2 (SO): Casey Mittelstadt scored in the fourth round of the shootout, and

host Buffalo won its season-high third straight.

Owen Power forced overtime by scoring with 4:05 left in regulation, and Jeff Skinner also scored for the Sabres, who had not won three straight since a 3-0 run from April 6-10. Power's goal came in his first game after missing six with an injury to his left arm.

Lightning 4, Devils 1: Nikita Kucherov had a goal and three assists and became the first player in the league to reach 100 points this season in leading visiting Tampa Bay past New Jersey.

Kucherov leads the NHL with 102 points. Victor Hedman, Brayden Point and Brandon Hagel were the recipients of Kucherov's 62nd, 63rd and 64th assists of the season and he added his 38th goal. Jonas Johansson made 18 saves in giving Andrei Vasilevskiy a rare day off.

Tyler Toffoli scored his 25th goal of the season for the Devils, who are 2-9-1 in the second half of back-to-back games.

Predators 4, Ducks 2: Filip Forsberg broke a tie early in the third period and also had an assist to help visiting Nashville beat Anaheim for its fifth straight victory.

It is the first time in Nashville's 25 seasons that it has swept a trip of at least five games.

Roman Josi and Gustav Nyquist also scored for Nashville, and Kevin Lankinen stopped 30 shots.

Nashville has 18 road victories, tied for third-most in the NHL. The Predators have points in seven of their last eight games away from home.

AUTO RACING/NBA



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Daniel Suarez, top, edges Kyle Busch, center, and Ryan Blaney at the finish line to win the NASCAR Cup race at Atlanta Motor Speedway on Sunday. It was the third-closest finish in a Cup race since 1993.

Suarez holds off Busch, Blaney in 3-wide finish

BY CHARLES ODUM
Associated Press

HAMPTON, Ga.— Daniel Suarez hoped but wasn't certain he was the winner after the closest finish ever at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

Then came the photo evidence: Suarez edged Ryan Blaney and Kyle Busch in a three-wide blur at the line to win a crashed-filled NASCAR Cup Series race on Sunday.

The second career win in 253 Cup races for Suarez set off a celebration that included a long series of congratulations from other drivers for the popular native of Monterrey, Mexico.

"It was a very special moment," said Suarez, who entered this contract year with his future seemingly uncertain with Trackhouse Racing.

"I was just hoping. I saw the tower and thought I was first. I thought I had it but then they said there was a review."

The review confirmed the first win for Suarez since June 2022 at Sonoma. It was his first victory on a speedway, but he said he's not satisfied after locking up a spot in the playoffs in only the second race of the year.

"Some people actually told me you can relax, now you're in the playoffs," Suarez said. "Hell no! My goal is to win more than one race. This is not relaxing here. ... The goal is for you to not be surprised when the 99 is in victory lane."

Busch, who won Saturday's Trucks race, moved to the middle between Blaney, the 2023 Cup champion, and Suarez to set up the dramatic finish. Blaney was second, only 0.003 seconds behind, and Busch was third.

"It was fun racing, but just a couple inches short," Blaney said.

"I'm happy for Daniel, though. That was fun racing him and Kyle. That was fun."

Suarez gave credit to Busch, another Chevrolet driver, for providing a late push.

"It's good to see Daniel get a win," Busch said. "We were helping each other being Chevy team partners and working together there. Shows that when you do have friends and you can make alliances that they do seem to work, and that was a good part of today."

A massive pileup of at least 16 cars on the second lap was the biggest in the history of Atlanta Motor Speedway and set the pace for a procession of wrecks. The crash left many cars heavily taped for the remainder of the afternoon.

The intensity picked up when Austin Cindric went to the bottom of the track in his Team Penske Ford for a four-wide pass to take the lead with 50 laps remaining.

Michael McDowell, who on Saturday won his first pole in his 467th start, won the first stage but collided with Daytona 500 champion William Byron while trying to slow down to enter pit row in the second stage. McDowell suffered right front damage and each car fell one lap behind.

The close finish

In addition to Atlanta's closest finish, it was the closest finish at any 1.5-mile track and the third-closest Cup finish since electronic scoring was established in 1993.

There were 10 cautions and an Atlanta-record 48 lead changes.

Gilliland's best race

Todd Gilliland led 58 laps, the most of his career and especially notable for a third-year driver who led a combined 11 laps in his first two seasons. He finished 26th.

The 23-year-old North Carolina

native, looked at home on the Atlanta track with a "Georgia Peanuts" logo on the hood of his Front Row Motorsports Ford.

Logano, Elliott sent back

After qualifying second on Saturday, Joey Logano had to start at the back of the field and serve a pass-through penalty for a safety violation with his gloves. Chase Elliott, who qualified 28th, also was pushed to the back row, one spot ahead of Logano, following unapproved adjustments to the engine sensor on his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet.

Two Ford drivers for Stewart-Haas Racing, Noah Gragson and Ryan Preece, had items from their cars confiscated for inspection on Friday. Rulings from NASCAR could come next week.

Elliott, who earned his first win at his Atlanta home track in 2022, started stage 3 in fourth place. Elliott was eighth when he was tapped from behind by Ross Chastain and sent into a spin that ended his hopes of winning.

Lap 2 melee

Suarez was part of the 16-car pileup at the start of the second lap. Josh Williams' Chevrolet was taken to the garage while expected contenders Alex Bowman, Austin Dillon, Tyler Reddick, Elliott, Bubba Wallace and Christopher Bell also remained in the race with damaged vehicles.

The beneficiary was Logano, who served his pass-through penalty during the caution and emerged in 20th place at the restart. Logano's dramatic recovery continued as he was 12th at the end of the first stage.

Logano's luck ran out on the final lap of Stage 2 when he drifted into the path of Chris Buescher's Ford and Hamlin's Toyota.

NBA BRIEFS

Hawks' Young out at least 4 weeks with finger injury

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Hawks have lost All-Star point guard Trae Young for at least four weeks with a torn ligament in his left pinkie finger.

The Hawks announced the injury Sunday. Young was hurt during Friday night's loss to Toronto and will have surgery Tuesday at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York.

The team said Young will be evaluated in four weeks.

"You feel awful for Trae more than anything," Hawks coach Quin Snyder said. "It is going to be a challenge for him not to be out there."

The loss of Young comes as the Hawks, fighting for the final play-in spot in the Eastern Conference, are facing front-line depth issues as center Onyeka Okongwu recovers from a sprained left toe. Snyder said Thursday that Okongwu is not going to be available for the foreseeable future.

"You have to adapt," Snyder said. "That happened when we lost Jalen (Johnson). We have to have minutes from Kobe (Bufkin) and Patty (Mills) and we obviously know what (Dejounte Murray) can do. I don't want to wallow in anything."

The Hawks entered Sunday 2-3 in games Young has missed this season.

Young, who made his third All-Star team this year, leads Atlanta with his averages of 26.4 points and 10.8 assists per game. Murray likely will assume primary ball-handling duties with Young sidelined, and Bogdan Bogdanovic took Young's spot in the starting lineup for Sunday night's game against Orlando. In 46 games as a reserve, Bogdanovic is averaging 16.8 points.

"This will be fluid. If Boji starts, we lose his punch off the bench," Snyder said. "Do you want him stabilizing the second unit? There's a lot of things that go into it. We will approach it that way."

5 given suspensions after Heat-Pelicans incident

NEW YORK — Miami's Jimmy Butler and New Orleans' Naji Marshall have been suspended for one game apiece for instigating an on-court altercation, the NBA announced Sunday.

The incident happened during the Heat-Pelicans game Friday night.

Miami's Thomas Bryant and New Orleans' Jose Alvarado were both handed three-game suspen-



JASON ALLEN/AP

Hawks guard Trae Young reacts after a play on Friday against the Raptors. Young tore a ligament in his finger during the game.

sions for fighting and leaving the bench area. Miami's Nikola Jovic also got a one-game suspension for leaving the bench area and entering the altercation, the league said.

"It felt like Jimmy shouldn't have gotten a game on that," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said Sunday at practice in Sacramento, where Miami played Monday. "It was really just kind of tangling and a little bit of pushing. I don't think that deserves another game because he ended up having to miss the fourth quarter (Friday). But it is what it is. Nobody wants to see it escalate to that point."

Butler — who did not think he should have been ejected — will lose nearly \$260,000 in base salary because of his suspension. The rest of the suspensions will cost the four other players about \$115,000 combined.

"I put my hand around his neck. He put his hand around my neck," Butler said after the game of his incident with Marshall. "And it just took off the way it did."

It started when Miami's Kevin Love fouled New Orleans' Zion Williamson under the Pelicans' basket. Butler and Marshall "engaged in a physical altercation" after the foul, the league said, and Alvarado and Bryant then fought.

Alvarado, Bryant, Butler and Marshall were assessed technical fouls and ejected from the game, which the Heat won 106-95.

The Heat could be further short-handed on Monday. Guard Tyler Herro, who left late in Friday's game after thinking he had injured his knee, was having an MRI exam on Sunday as a precaution.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	45	12	.789	—
New York	34	23	.596	11
Philadelphia	33	24	.579	12
Brooklyn	21	35	.375	23½
Toronto	21	36	.368	24
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	31	25	.554	—
Orlando	32	26	.552	—
Atlanta	25	32	.439	6½
Charlotte	15	42	.263	16½
Washington	9	48	.158	22½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	37	19	.661	—
Milwaukee	37	21	.638	1
Indiana	33	25	.569	5
Chicago	27	30	.474	10½
Detroit	8	48	.143	29

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New Orleans	34	24	.586	—
Dallas	33	24	.579	½
Houston	25	32	.439	8½
Memphis	20	37	.351	13½
San Antonio	11	47	.190	23
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	40	17	.702	—
Oklahoma City	40	17	.702	—
Denver	39	19	.672	1½
Utah	27	31	.466	13½
Portland	15	41	.268	24½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	37	19	.661	—
Sacramento	33	23	.589	4
Phoenix	34	24	.586	4
L.A. Lakers	31	28	.525	7½
Golden State	29	27	.518	8

Saturday's games
 Orlando 112, Detroit 109
 Boston 116, New York 102
 Minnesota 101, Brooklyn 86

Sunday's games
 Milwaukee 119, Philadelphia 98
 Phoenix 123, L.A. Lakers 113
 Indiana 133, Dallas 111
 Cleveland 114, Washington 105
 Chicago 114, New Orleans 106
 Atlanta 109, Orlando 92
 Oklahoma City 123, Houston 110
 Denver 119, Golden State 103
 Utah 128, San Antonio 109
 Charlotte 93, Portland 80
 Sacramento 123, L.A. Clippers 107

Monday's games
 Toronto at Indiana
 Detroit at New York
 Brooklyn at Memphis
 Miami at Sacramento

Tuesday's games
 Brooklyn at Orlando
 Dallas at Cleveland
 Golden State at Washington
 New Orleans at New York
 Philadelphia at Boston
 Utah at Atlanta
 Charlotte at Milwaukee
 Detroit at Chicago
 San Antonio at Minnesota
 Houston at Oklahoma City
 Miami at Portland

Wednesday's games
 Dallas at Toronto
 New Orleans at Indiana
 Cleveland at Chicago
 Memphis at Minnesota
 Sacramento at Denver
 L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers

Scoring leaders					
Through Sunday					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Doncic, DAL	49	566	357	1680	34.3
Gil.-Alex., OKC	56	615	445	1746	31.2
Antetokoun., MIL	56	645	409	1725	30.8
Mitchell, CLE	45	438	241	1265	28.1
Durant, PHO	51	517	279	1426	28.0
Curry, GS	53	480	246	1468	27.7
Brunson, NY	54	528	290	1489	27.6
Booker, PHO	48	460	296	1318	27.5
Fox, SAC	50	485	232	1345	26.9
Tatum, BOS	54	496	297	1455	26.9
Young, ATL	51	418	339	1344	26.4
Edwards, MIN	54	494	295	1422	26.3

ROUNDUP

Jokic has 3rd straight triple-double

Denver star keeps streak going in win over Golden State

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Nikola Jokic insists he's not changing anything during his latest run of triple-double dominance, just finding the flow of the game as it comes.

Doing it all for Denver on both ends yet again, Jokic has the defending champions off to a 3-0 start after the All-Star break following a three-game skid right before it.

Jokic had 32 points, 16 rebounds and 16 assists for his third straight triple-double and 18th of the season after his long buzzer-beater against Golden State sealed the last meeting, leading the Nuggets past the Warriors again in a 119-103 victory Sunday night.

"We had three losses before All-Star break. Now we have three wins. It's how the game is, a game of runs. In season you have a good period, bad period, you want to have a longer good period than bad and a short bad period," Jokic said. "I think we are just going in the right direction. That is the most important thing."

Jokic hit a Stephen Curry-like 40-footer as Denver rallied for a 130-127 win at Chase Center on Jan. 4, then topped Curry and Co. to sweep the four-game season series. On Sunday, Jokic shot 13-for-24 on the way to his 122nd career regular-season triple-double.

Nuggets coach Michael Malone is thrilled with his team's focus as the regular season winds down — and sweeping the Warriors in four games this season certainly makes a statement. This marked the 10th time a Golden State opponent won after trailing by double digits.

"I felt for the first quarter and a half they were the aggressor, they had us on our heels and we were reacting to everything they did," Malone said. "For us to close out 14-0 and then to start the third 14-4, I think we kind of flipped the switch and we became the aggressor on both ends and stopped thinking and started playing with an attack mindset and an aggressive mindset, and I think that's when we're at our best."

Klay Thompson scored 23 points all in the first half and Curry overcame a slow start missing his first seven 3-point tries before finishing with 20 points — all but four scored in the second half. He hit his only 3 with 3:26 left in the third in a 1-for-10 performance



GODOFREDO A. VASQUEZ/AP

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic tries to get around Golden State Warriors center Kevon Looney during the first half Sunday in San Francisco. Jokic had 32 points in the Nuggets' 119-103 victory.

from deep. The two-time MVP passed both Dwyane Wade (23,165) for 32nd place and Adrian Dantley (23,177) for 31st on the NBA's scoring list.

Suns 123, Lakers 113: Grayson Allen scored 24 points, Kevin Durant added 22 and host Phoenix pulled away late in the fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles.

Allen and Royce O'Neale hit 3-pointers on back-to-back possessions to put the Suns up 116-104 with three minutes left. Jusuf Nurkic added 18 points, 22 rebounds and seven assists.

The Lakers trailed by 20 points late in the first quarter, but slowly cut the deficit to 92-90 by late in the third. Phoenix responded with the next six points and didn't trail in the fourth.

Bucks 119, 76ers 98: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 30 points, Damian Lillard added 24 and visiting Milwaukee won in Doc Rivers' return to Philadelphia.

Rivers was fired by Philadelphia after last season. He coached the 76ers from 2020-23, never getting past the second round of the playoffs, and Sunday was his 12th game since taking over in Milwaukee.

Tyrese Maxey had 24 points for Philadelphia. The 76ers have dropped eight of 12 games since losing reigning MVP Joel Embiid to a left knee injury.

Thunder 123, Rockets 110: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 36 points and Chet Holmgren added 29 to lead visiting Oklahoma

City past Houston.

The Thunder won their fifth straight to move back into a tie with Minnesota for the Western Conference lead.

Fred VanVleet and Jabari Smith Jr. had 20 points apiece for the Rockets in the first of consecutive games between these teams. Alperen Sengun added 19 points and 12 rebounds, while Smith led the team with 17 rebounds.

Kings 123, Clippers 107: De'Aaron Fox scored 33 points, Domantas Sabonis had his NBA-leading 20th triple-double and visiting Sacramento handed Los Angeles its first two-game losing streak since December.

Sabonis finished with 17 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists. Harrison Barnes added 22 points for the Kings, who won their third in a row.

Norman Powell led the Clippers with 21 points in his first start of the season in place of Paul George, who sat out with a sore left knee. Kawhi Leonard added 20 points, as did James Harden, who made all 10 of his free throws to go with eight assists.

Hornets 93, Trail Blazers 80: Nick Richards had 21 points and 10 rebounds and visiting Charlotte took advantage of Portland's horrible 3-point shooting.

Portland was 3-for-32 from 3-point range, with two of the makes coming in the final minutes. The Trail Blazers missed 23 in a row at one point in dropping their eighth straight to fall to 15-41.

Miles Bridges added 18 points and 10 rebounds for Charlotte, and Brandon Miller had 17 points. The Hornets improved to 15-42.

Pacers 133, Mavericks 111: Myles Turner scored a season-high 33 points, Tyrese Haliburton had 17 points and 10 assists and host Indiana beat Dallas to snap the Mavericks' seven-game winning streak.

Luka Doncic finished with 33 points, six assists and six rebounds for Dallas. Kyrie Irving added 29 points and six rebounds.

Hawks 109, Magic 92: Dejounte Murray had 25 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds, finishing just short of his first triple-double of the season, and host Atlanta beat Orlando to snap a three-game skid.

Murray helped offset the loss of All-Star guard Trae Young, who will undergo surgery on his left hand Tuesday and will be re-evaluated in four weeks.

Cavaliers 114, Wizards 105: Jarrett Allen had 22 points and 12 rebounds, Caris LeVert added 18 points and 12 boards and visiting Cleveland beat Washington to avoid its first three-game skid since December.

Bulls 114, Pelicans 106: Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 13 rebounds and visiting Chicago beat New Orleans to sweep the season series.

Jazz 128, Spurs 109: Lauri Markkanen scored 26 points and host Utah beat San Antonio to snap a five-game skid.

MLB

Turner already shows value for Blue Jays

BY CHRIS NELSEN
Associated Press

DUNEDIN, Fla. — Toronto Blue Jays manager John Schneider is already seeing the potential benefits of having Justin Turner in his starting lineup.

Turner hit an RBI single, walked and scored a run in a 14-13 Grapefruit League loss to the Philadelphia Phillies on Saturday. The 39-year-old Turner signed a \$13 million, one-year deal with the Blue Jays after spending last season with the Boston Red Sox.

“That’s what we’re looking for from J.T., understanding hitting situations,” Schneider said. “That’s exactly what he’s been doing his whole career.”

After Bo Bichette’s single in the first inning, Turner drew a walk from Phillies starter Kolby Allard. After Danny Jansen also walked, Daulton Varsho knocked Turner in with a two-run double.

In the third inning, Bichette led off with a single up the middle, then stole second base. Turner followed with an RBI single over shortstop Edmundo Sosa’s outstretched glove.



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Toronto Blue Jays’ Justin Turner hit and RBI single, walked and scored a run in Saturday’s Grapefruit League loss to the Philadelphia Phillies. Turner signed a one-year, \$13 million deal with the Blue Jays.

Although some of Toronto’s regular starters such as Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and George Spring-

er didn’t play Saturday, Schneider said having Turner hit behind Bichette worked in the opener.

“Still working through it a little bit,” Schneider said of his lineup. “It’s nice to have him behind Bo.

We’ll play around with it. There’s a couple different ways to do it, but he’ll be at the top of the order, for sure.”

Bichette finished with two singles and two runs scored.

“I was encouraged with Bo,” Schneider said. “We know he’s aggressive, and he gets into a 3-0 count his last at-bat laying off some pitches. Bo can hit in his sleep, so rolling out a couple knocks early is no surprise.”

Turner was a designated hitter Saturday but also played first base, second base and third base with Boston. He hit .276 with 23 homers, 96 RBIs and an .800 OPS last season.

“For a few years now, I’ve been in contact with (Toronto) talking about possibly being a fit,” Turner said. “I started my major league career with the Orioles. This is my third stint in the AL East.”

The Blue Jays scratched expected starting pitcher Ricky Tiedemann as he deals with inflammation between his hamstring and calf. Schneider said the left-hander is day-to-day.

SPRING TRAINING ROUNDUP

Mets’ Senga won’t throw again for at least 3 weeks

BY DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

New York Mets right-hander Kodai Senga won’t throw for about three weeks as the team sees how his ailing shoulder responds to a platelet-rich plasma injection.

Mets manager Carlos Mendoza told reporters Sunday that Senga went to New York for the injection a few days ago and is now back in camp in Florida.

“That’s what was recommended by the doctor when they took a look at him, and Senga was on board,” Mendoza said. “So we decided to go that route.”

Senga had a stellar rookie season for the Mets in 2023, finishing 12-7 with a 2.98 ERA. The 31-year-old All-Star finished second in NL Rookie of the Year voting and seventh in the Cy Young Award race.

Stroman makes Yankees debut

Marcus Stroman threw 2⅓ innings in his first spring training start with the New York Yankees on Sunday, giving up three runs on four hits and a walk while striking out two.

The 32-year-old right-hander — who grew up on Long Island about 55 miles from Yankee Stadium — signed a \$37 million, two-year deal during the offseason. He said it was “exciting getting the first one under the belt” after throwing 31 of 52 pitches for strikes in a split-squad game against the Philadelphia Phillies.

“I felt good in spurts today, just wasn’t overall over the 50 pitches,” Stroman said. “I just need to increase my consistency and feeling good in my mechanics more often. I just feel like it was probably maybe around 25 to 30 pitches today out of the 50.”

Stroman went ahead 0-2 in the count on



JEFF ROBBERSON/AP

New York Mets pitcher Kodai Senga smiles during a workout Feb. 20 in Port St. Lucie, Fla. Senga will be shut down for at least three more weeks with a shoulder injury.

five of his first six batters, but had the count reach 3-2 on four of them.

“As far as throwing strikes and being able to come in the zone with a few of my pitches, I feel like I’m ahead of schedule in that sense,” Stroman said. “But definitely not synced up and where I need to be mechanically heading in a season. But, over the next, you know, two, three, four outings, I see that all coming together.”

Also on Sunday in New York’s other split-squad game, slugger Juan Soto connected for his first spring homer in pinstripes, going

deep in the fourth inning off Toronto right-hander Trevor Richards.

Nola throws 2 perfect innings

Philadelphia right-hander Aaron Nola worked two perfect innings against the Yankees in his first spring training start since signing a \$172 million, seven-year offseason deal to remain with the Phillies.

Nola struck out three during a 33-pitch outing.

“It’s spring training, but obviously you want to really look at it as in really trying to

prepare as best as possible for the season,” Nola said. “I have a better beat on that now as I’ve gone through all the spring trainings.”

The 30-year-old is entering his 10th big league season and could become the longest-tenured pitcher in team history, surpassing Steve Carlton’s 15 years.

Nola struggled at times during last year’s regular season, finishing 12-9 with a 4.46 ERA. But the righty excelled in the playoffs with a 2.35 ERA and 23 strikeouts in 23 innings. He’s also durable: His 1,065⅓ innings since 2018 are second-most behind Yankees ace Gerrit Cole.

Also on Sunday, manager Rob Thomson said Phillies stars J.T. Realmuto and Bryce Harper are scheduled to make their spring training debuts Wednesday during a home game against the Atlanta Braves.

Rodón’s solid outing

Yankees left-hander Carlos Rodón threw 2⅓ innings against the Blue Jays on Sunday, giving up just one hit and one run in his first spring training start.

Alejandro Kirk hit a solo homer in the third for Toronto.

Rodón struck out five, walked two and hit a batter during a 48-pitch outing.

“It’s a good first step,” Rodón said. “My goal is to stay on the field and to pitch every five or six days. Good to compete against someone with a different uniform on, and a nice vibe from the crowd in a real game setting.”

After signing a \$162 million, six-year contract, Rodón didn’t make his Yankees debut last season until July 7 because of injuries and wound up 3-8 with a 6.85 ERA in 14 starts.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Purdue center Zach Edey dunks on Michigan forward Will Tschetter, left, during the first half of Sunday's game in Ann Arbor, Mich. Edey matched his season high with 35 points and 15 rebounds.

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

No. 3 Purdue overcomes slow start, tops Michigan

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Zach Edey took advantage of Michigan's attempts to defend him with only one player.

Edey matched his season high with 35 points and had 15 rebounds, helping No. 3 Purdue bounce back from a rough start to beat the Wolverines 84-76 on Sunday.

"I'm used to getting doubled as soon as I catch it, as soon as I dribble, but they wanted to play me one-on-one," he said. "My teammates recognized that and got me the ball a lot. I just tried to do what I do."

The 7-foot-4 Edey made 14 of 18 shots and scored 35 points for the third time this season, falling three short of equaling his career high.

"He probably would have scored 35 on me, too," said Michigan coach Juwan Howard, a member of the school's Fab Five and a former NBA standout.

The Boilermakers (25-3, 14-3 Big Ten) are closing in on winning a second straight conference championship, building a 2½-game lead over No. 12 Illinois with three regular-season games left on their schedule.

The Wolverines (8-20, 3-14) moved closer to clinching last place in the Big Ten with their fifth straight loss and 10th setback in 11 games under their embattled coach.

Michigan saw about half of its arena filled with black-and-gold-



ADAM HUNGER/AP

Daniss Jenkins' season-high 27 points helped St. John's knock off No. 15 Creighton.

wearing fans chanting and cheering for the visitors, eight days after Michigan State fans in the stands made it look and sound as if the Wolverines were playing on the road.

"It felt like Mackey Arena in there tonight," Michigan senior forward Terrance Williams II said.

Dug McDaniel had 19 points and six assists for the Wolverines, who had four more scorers reach double digits.

As usual, Edey had a few teammates contributing offensively. Lance Jones scored 15, Braden Smith had 11 points and Fletcher Loyer added nine.

No. 7 Marquette 88, Xavier 64: Kam Jones celebrated his 22nd birthday by scoring 34 points for a second straight game and the host Golden Eagles trounced the slumping Musketeers.

Tyler Kolek added 11 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds to help Marquette (21-6, 12-4 Big East) win for the 10th time in 11 games. Oso Ighodaro had 12 points and David Joplin got 10.

Xavier (13-14, 7-9) lost its fourth straight. Trey Green scored 16 points, Quincy Olivari 14, Dailyn Swain 11 and Dayvion McKnight 10 for the Musketeers.

St. John's 80, No. 15 Creighton 66: Daniss Jenkins scored a season-high 27 points and the host Red Storm shredded the Bluejays for their biggest victory under Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino.

Jordan Dingle added 18 points and St. John's (16-12, 8-9 Big East) finally closed out a top-quality conference opponent following a string of blown leads.

Trey Alexander scored a season-best 31 points for Creighton (20-8, 11-6), which had won four straight and seven of nine. The Bluejays were coming off an eye-opening blowout of UConn at home Tuesday night that ended the Huskies' 14-game winning streak and marked the program's first victory over a top-ranked team.

Ryan Kalkbrenner had 12 points, 10 rebounds and eight blocks for Creighton.

Back: Loyola six years past berth in Final Four

FROM PAGE 24

Loyola remains the only school from Illinois to win the NCAA title, with a team that plowed over racial barriers and captured the prize in 1963. The Ramblers came close again with a Final Four run in 2018, hitting several last-second shots with Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt — now 104 — by their side for their first tournament appearance since 1985.

They returned to the Sweet 16 in 2021 and got back to the NCAA Tournament the following year, in Valentine's first season after former coach Porter Moser left for Oklahoma.

Valentine obviously had quite an act to follow when, at age 29, Loyola promoted him after four years as an assistant with the Ramblers. They went 25-8 and won the Missouri Valley Tournament in his first year before bottoming out in the Atlantic 10. Loyola struggled to replace star Lucas Williamson, who played on the Final Four team, along with several other key players and went 4-14 in league play last season.

It was, Valentine said, "not fun" and enough to make him question whether he was doing things the right way. His conclusion? He was doing things the right way.

The 32-year-old Valentine played a big role in Loyola's rise as an assistant. He helped recruit some of the Ramblers' best players and basically coordinated

a defense that ranked among the nation's stingiest.

Valentine's father Carlton is a successful high school coach in Michigan who played at Michigan State in the 1980s. Younger brother Denzel starred for the Spartans and went on to the NBA.

"I have such a strong foundation with my beliefs and how I was raised in the game," Drew Valentine said. "So I just doubled down on it. We went to work with our roster and, I think, got our roster to the point where we could be competitive. It also helped that our resources went up; I think you can read between the lines on that. And I think our roster improved because of that. The guys that came back, they believe in this place."

Guard Des Watson could see it when when he made his recruiting visit. He chose to transfer to Loyola over Dayton after two years at Davidson and is averaging a team-leading 13.1 points in his first season with the Ramblers.

"A lot of people were questioning why would I come to Loyola? We beat Loyola last year when I was at Davidson last year. 'Why would you go to that coaching staff?'" Watson said. "There's certain stuff you can just hear in people's voice and you just know. With Drew, I could hear in his voice that he was ready for a switch and he was ready to turn the team into something different."



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Eleven games into the season, Loyola Chicago sat at 6-5. "I think it was just like a look-in-the-mirror type of moment for us," said forward Philip Alston, above. "We all kind of just told each other that we were going to really take this to the next level. I think we did."

SPORTS

Three-wide finish in Atlanta

Mexico native Suarez confirmed winner after review » Auto racing, Page 20



COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Back on the winning track

Loyola Chicago regains old form after last-place finish

BY ANDREW SELIGMAN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Loyola Chicago was reeling after a rough loss to South Florida early this season when coach Drew Valentine decided to have a heart-to-heart conversation with his team.

That moment of reflection wound up becoming a turning point in the season.

Six years removed from a Final Four run that made a 98-year-old nun a celebrity, Loyola is winning big again. The Ramblers are as hot as any team in the Atlantic 10 and have their sights set on the NCAA Tournament.

Loyola (20-7, 12-2) is tied with Richmond for the league lead, with No. 16 Dayton one game back. It's a welcome change for the Ramblers after finishing last in the Atlantic 10 a year ago following a move from the Missouri Valley Conference. After beating George Mason 80-59 on Saturday, they doubled their win total after going 10-21.



Valentine

"This program is built on championships," guard Braden Norris said. "It's great ... the turnaround that we've had, but we're here to win a regular-season championship — we're in a great place — and then go on to Brooklyn and win three games in a row there (in the conference tournament) and then see what we can do in the (NCAA) Tournament. That's our goal."

Things weren't looking so good for Loyola after they "got punked," as Valentine put it, in a lackluster loss at South Florida in mid-December. The Ramblers were 6-5, with losses to two teams ranked in the top 10 at the time in FAU and Creighton. They're 14-2 since have won seven straight.

"I think it was just like a look-in-the-mirror type of moment for us," forward Philip Alston said. "We all kind of just told each other that we were going to really take this to the next level. I think we did."

SEE BACK ON PAGE 23



CHARLIE RIEDEL, ABOVE, AND JEFF ROBERSON, LEFT/AP

Above: Guard Braden Norris says Loyola Chicago is in a great place right now, but the Ramblers have bigger goals ahead, including an NCAA Tournament berth. Left: Guard Des Watson, left, chose to transfer to Loyola instead of Dayton after two years at Davidson and is averaging a team-leading 13.1 points.



Jokic notches triple-double against Warriors » NBA, Page 21

