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AFGHANISTAN

PHOTOS BY RAHMAT GUL/AP

Internally displaced tribal leader Dawlat Khan plays with his children and nephews in a house provided to him by relatives on the outskirts of Jalalabad, Afghanistan, last week. Khan fled his village of Pananzai at the height of the battles against the Islamic State terror network.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Many wish for an easy pill to help treat COVID

BY MARILYNN MARCHIONE
Associated Press

If Priscila Medina had gotten COVID-19 a year ago, she would have had no treatments proven safe and effective to try. But when the 30-year-old nurse arrived at a Long Island hospital last month, so short of breath she could barely talk, doctors knew just what to do.

They quickly arranged for her to get a novel drug that supplies virus-blocking antibodies, and “by the next day I was able to get up and move around,” she said. After two days, “I really started turning the corner. I was showering, eating, playing with my son.”

Treatments like these can help newly diagnosed patients avoid hospitalization, but they are grossly underused because they require an IV. Other medicines for sicker patients can speed recovery, but only a few improve survival.

While vaccines are helping to curb the pandemic, easier and better treatments are needed, especially as virus variants spread.

“We’re seeing more and more young people get into serious trouble ... serious disease requiring hospitalization, and occasionally even tragic deaths,” the U.S. gov-

SEE COVID ON PAGE 7

RELATED

US military could vaccinate workers on bases in Europe
Page 6

Degraded – but dangerous

Islamic State remains a threat while in retreat

BY KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Tribal elder Dawlat Khan still has nightmares about fighters from the local affiliate of the global Islamic State terror network who swept across his and other villages in eastern Afghanistan five years ago.

The extremists, including Afghans, Pakistanis, Arabs and men from Central Asia, quickly imposed a reign of terror. They kidnapped some locals who worked for the Afghan government, later dropping off their decapitated

corpses in public places. In one instance, villagers were summoned to a beheading where some fainted while others froze as they watched in horror.

Militants of Islamic State have since been driven back into the mountains by blistering U.S. and Afghan bombing raids and a fierce ground campaign by the Taliban, Afghanistan’s homegrown insurgents. The Taliban, eager to expand their domestic political power, pledged to the Trump adminis-

SEE THREAT ON PAGE 4



Afghan security police search a man at a checkpoint in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, last week.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Apple's iPhone privacy update arrives after delay

Associated Press

SAN RAMON, Calif. — Apple is following through on its pledge to crack down on Facebook and other snoop apps that secretly shadow people on their iPhones in order to target more advertising at users.

The new privacy feature, dubbed "App Tracking Transparency," rolled out Monday as part of an update to the operating system powering the iPhone and iPad. The anti-tracking shield included in iOS 14.5 ar-

rives after a seven-month delay during which Apple and Facebook attacked each other's business models and motives for decisions that affect billions of people around the world.

Once the software update is installed — something most iPhone users do — even existing apps already on the device will be required to ask and receive consent to track online activities. That's a shift Facebook fiercely resisted, most prominently in a series of full-page

newspaper ads blasting Apple.

But Apple says it is just looking out for the best interests of the more than 1 billion people currently using iPhones.

"Now is a good time to bring this out, both because of because of the increasing amount of data they have on their devices, and their sensitivity (about the privacy risks) is increasing, too," Erik Neuenschwander, Apple's chief privacy engineer, told The Associated Press in an interview.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (April 28)	\$1.18	Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770
Dollar buys (April 28)	0.8066	Britain (Pound)	1.3902
British pound (April 28)	\$1.35	Canada (Dollar)	1.2403
Japanese yen (April 28)	105.00	China (Yuan)	6.4850
South Korean won (April 28)	1,084.00	Denmark (Krone)	6.1532
		Egypt (Pound)	15.7003
		Euro	.8275
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7618
		Hungary (Forint)	300.39
		Israel (Shekel)	3.2401
		Japan (Yen)	108.42
		Kuwait (Dinar)	.3011
		Norway (Krone)	8.2902
		Philippines (Peso)	48.43
		Poland (Zloty)	3.78
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7502
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3258

South Korea (Won)	1,112.97
Switzerland (Franc)	.9142
Thailand (Baht)	31.35
Turkey (New Lira)	8.1933

(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	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.03
30-year bond	2.24

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

Every Friday in the European and Pacific editions of Stars and Stripes AND online daily at www.stripes.com/relo

MILITARY

Guam: Navy should share cost of toxic cleanup

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The federal government has shielded the U.S. Navy from paying its fair share to clean up a toxic dump on Guam by selective use of two key environmental laws, an attorney for Guam argued Monday before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"The bottom line is that the United States wants to have its cake and eat it, too," said Gregory Garre, a former U.S. solicitor general, representing Guam, according to a transcript of oral arguments.

The Supreme Court has been asked to scrutinize the applicability of provisions found in the Clean Water Act and the so-called Superfund Act, both administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

At issue is the cleanup of the 23-acre Or-

dot Landfill, which the Navy created during World War II for the vast amount of refuse generated during that conflict and later during the Cold War. It was also the primary dump used by Guam residents for decades.

The landfill, which the federal government turned over to Guam in the 1970s, has leached toxic waste into the Lonfit River and two of its tributaries.

Guam is faced with more than \$160 million in cleanup costs for the site, according to court documents the territory filed.

"That figure is a staggering sum for the people of Guam, alone comprising nearly a fifth of its total annual budget," according to Guam's petition in October to the Supreme Court seeking to overturn a lower court decision.

The Supreme Court agreed in January to hear the case.

In 1980, Congress enacted the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act—or Superfund Act—that imposed the costs of cleaning up hazardous dumpsites on current and past owners of the sites and others who contributed to the hazard.

The EPA, which administers the Superfund Act, listed the Ordot dump as a priority for cleanup in 1983. The agency named the Navy as one of the parties potentially responsible for the site.

The federal government sued Guam to clean up the site in 2002, but instead of litigating under the Superfund Act it did so under the Clean Water Act. The case was settled by consent decree in 2004 when Guam

agreed to close and cover the landfill. Guam did not admit liability in the decree.

Guam sued the Navy in 2017 under provisions in the Superfund Act that could force the federal government to contribute to cleanup costs.

A lower court decided that Guam could seek "contribution" by the Navy under the Superfund Act, even though the consent decree settlement had been wholly under the Clean Water Act.

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed that decision, which Guam appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court's decision is expected in the next few months.

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NCO earns Soldier's Medal after saving women, dog in house fire

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A soldier who repeatedly ran into a burning house and helped two women and a dog was awarded the Army's highest award for bravery off the battlefield.

Sgt. 1st Class Jedidia Powell received the Soldier's Medal in a ceremony April 10 near Portland, Ore., from Brig. Gen. Gregory Day, commander of the Oregon National Guard's land component, and Col. Philip DeMontigny, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team commander. An audience of fellow soldiers applauded him, a video shows.

Powell, a full-time Guard non-commissioned officer, was on duty in Portland one afternoon in late

November 2017 when a state maintenance worker poked his head in the door and said a house was on fire down the street. There were no emergency crews on the scene, so Powell ran out to help.

About a block and a half away, a teenage boy was assisting his severely burned mother out of the building and calling for help, Powell said. He got her to safety, then ran into the house.

"There's huge flames coming from the kitchen, a lot of smoke," he said in a recent video interview. "I noticed a woman on my right-hand side who was disoriented down on the floor. She was trying to grab a dog."

He got both the woman and her dog out of the house and laid her

next to the other woman, then returned to the house to clear other rooms. As Powell exited, a fellow soldier showed up and they ran together to the back of the house to make sure the garage was empty.

"After we thought the house was completely empty, we went ahead and went to the front side of the house, noticed that there were first-responders there, felt it was under control and we decided to go back to work," he said. "It really wasn't no big thing."

It took three minutes to clear the burning house, but almost four years for the award to wend its way through the administrative process, Powell said at the ceremony, where he thanked members of his command for their per-



SCREENSHOT, DIVIDS

Brig. Gen. Gregory Day pins the Soldier's Medal on Sgt. 1st Class Jedidia Powell at Camp Withycombe, Ore., on April 10.

sistence.

The award package took "a significant amount of work," Maj. Matthew Branstetter, a personnel officer in the 41st Infantry BCT, said in an online video.

Day, the general, said in a Facebook video of the award event that Powell had recalled that before

running to the fire, he told another soldier "follow me."

"That's kind of the epitome of a good NCO," Day said. "You know, leads his soldiers into harm's way."

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Spangdahlem airman gets jail time for deadly drunken driving accident

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany — A night of heavy drinking with fellow airmen that ended in a deadly car crash two years ago has landed a Spangdahlem airman in jail for three years and ended his military career.

Senior Airman Jade A. Westmoreland was sentenced after pleading guilty to negligent homicide and related charges at a Spangdahlem court-martial Monday before military judge Col. Charles Wiedie.

Westmoreland also received a bad-conduct discharge and a reduction to E-1.

The senior airman admitted to being drunk behind the wheel on April 20, 2019, when he veered into the opposite lane and collided with a car carrying two local German men.

Kevin Schneider died at the scene of the wreck near Speicher, a village about seven miles southwest of Spangdahlem. His cousin, Pascal Mayer, sustained serious injuries.

"He was a happy guy," Schneider's mother, Petra Marx, said about her only son in tearful testimony. "He was helpful. He loved playing soccer and he loved his family."

Schneider was married with two daughters and a son on the way.

Westmoreland, assigned to the 52nd Maintenance Squadron, apologized to the victims and their

families.

He faced a maximum of six years in jail based on his guilty pleas to the charges, which also included reckless endangerment, and driving a vehicle while drunk and causing injury. A fourth charge of involuntary manslaughter was withdrawn as part of the plea agreement.

Prosecutors asked for a minimum of four years.

"This wasn't a freak accident," said Capt. Cynthia McGrath, a military lawyer for the government. "Every single decision the accused made that night put him in that car in the wrong lane."

Westmoreland told the judge he went out the evening before the crash with other airmen after working a long shift that was part of a base exercise.

He estimated consuming about seven mixed drinks and additional whiskey shots over five hours.

Prosecutors filled in more de-

tail, describing how Westmoreland and his friends had several rounds before going to Kajutes, a bar a few minutes' drive from the base.

A nearly empty whiskey bottle was later recovered in Westmoreland's car, prosecutors said.

Most of the airmen in Westmoreland's group took a taxi home around 3 a.m. But Westmoreland told the judge he couldn't afford a taxi because of expenses from a recent off-base move.

He said he stayed at the bar drinking with "Sergeant Brown," who was described in court as Westmoreland's supervisor.

Westmoreland drove Brown home around 5:30 a.m. and sat in his Volvo S40 talking with him in his driveway. When Brown didn't invite him to stay over, Westmoreland said he continued driving but pulled over and passed out for about 90 minutes.

That Westmoreland gave an air-

man "two ranks above him" a ride home should be a mitigating factor in sentencing, his defense attorney said. It was unclear Monday whether Brown was disciplined for letting Westmoreland drive drunk.

Prosecutors said Westmoreland's blood alcohol content was .109 a few hours later at the hospital, and approximately .19 at the time of the crash. The legal limit in Germany is .05.

McGrath said Mayer, who was driving the other car, tried to swerve, but there was nothing he could do.

Mayer has had multiple surgeries to repair a fractured arm and has not recovered full use of one of his hands, according to court testimony. He still suffers from anxiety when driving, he wrote in a victim impact statement.

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Correction

A story in Tuesday's edition should have said that the German Red Cross is offering rapid antigen coronavirus tests.

WAR/MILITARY

US forces begin drawdown efforts in Afghanistan

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The commander of American forces in Afghanistan said some “local actions” related to the drawdown have already begun, though the U.S. withdrawal from the country is not set to begin formally until Saturday.

“All of our forces are now preparing to retrograde,” Army Gen. Scott Miller said Sunday during a news briefing in Kabul.

Part of the transition includes handing over military equipment and bases to Afghan forces, he said.

“There’s certain equipment that we must take back to our countries — that’s a requirement,” Miller said, according to a transcript of the briefing. “But wherever possible, if we do not have to, we’re looking to ensure that the Afghan security forces have the bases, pieces of equipment (and) parts that are necessary for the functioning of the military.”

Miller said he aims to leave Afghan security forces “in the best possible security posture” while ensuring the safety of foreign troops as they exit.

“We have the military means and capability to fully protect our force during retrograde as well as support the Afghan security forces,” the general said.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

on Friday sent two additional B-52 strategic bombers and extended the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower’s deployment to the region to offer Miller “options” to protect the exiting forces as needed, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said.

“It would be foolhardy and imprudent not to assume that there could be resistance and opposition to the drawdown by the Taliban,” he said.

On Monday, Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon that further resources — including troops — could be deployed to the region to assist.

“It is perfectly logical that we may see additional logistics personnel and engineering support to help with the physical movement of assets and people out of Afghanistan,” he said.

The drawdown will mean the only U.S. forces stationed in Afghanistan will be those needed to protect the American embassy there.

Miller said Sunday that a “return to violence” by the Taliban would be “senseless and tragic.”

“Make no mistake, we have the military means to respond forcefully to any type of attacks against the coalition and the military means to support the Afghan security forces,” he said.

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Review finds SOCOM tweet was typed in error

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A social media manager’s online search, not a security breach, resulted in a misleading tweet by Special Operations Command Central over the weekend, according to the unit.

The now-deleted tweet contained only the words “Afghanistan” and “Islamic State” in quotation marks, according to screenshots shared on the social media platform.

“In the past 12 hours someone hacked our unit’s official account and tweeted a misleading message,” the Tampa, Fla.-based command tweeted Saturday evening. “We apologize for any confusion or insensitive content.”

However, in a statement Monday a spokesman for the command, which is charged with planning special operations throughout the Middle East, Central Asia and parts of South Asia, said a hacker wasn’t responsible.

“After review, it was determined our Twitter account was not hacked and a social media administrator inadvertently tweeted the words while conducting a search for current topical events,” Army Maj. Tony Hoefler said in an email.

“No security breach took place, and we apologize for any confusion this may have caused,” he said.

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RAHMAT GUL / AP

Abdul Rauf, right, prays over the grave of his daughter Shahnaz Raufi, a worker at a TV station who was killed in a March attack claimed by Islamic State in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, on Wednesday.

Threat: Washington has come to see Taliban as a useful ally against ISIS

FROM PAGE 1

tration last year they would prevent any attacks on the West from Afghan soil after foreign troops leave.

Recent success in containing ISIS is central to the calculus of President Joe Biden, who decided earlier this month to pull all remaining U.S. troops out of Afghanistan by the summer. Biden argues that threats to the West, whether by ISIS or remnants of the al-Qaida network, can be defused from a distance.

Yet there are concerns that in the potential chaos of a post-withdrawal Afghanistan, ISIS “will be able to find additional space to operate,” said Seth Jones, senior vice-president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Some note that it took more than three years to dislodge and degrade ISIS fighters, many of them ethnic Pashtuns from Pakistan’s tribal regions and Afghans from the northeastern Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. The retreating militants left behind mined roads and fields.

Khan, the tribal leader, fled his village of Pananzai with his six brothers and their families at the height of the battles against ISIS. They’re not rushing home, even though the family of 63 people is crammed into nine small rooms in Nangarhar’s provincial capital of Jalalabad.

“We are afraid they will return,” Khan, a father of 12, said of ISIS fighters.

Biden has said he will hold the Taliban accountable for their commitment not to allow terror threats against the U.S. or its allies from Afghan soil. The U.S. invaded Afghanistan 20 years ago after al-Qaida militants, hosted by the Taliban, staged the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In recent years, Washington has come to see the Taliban as a national force, with no ambitions beyond their borders, according to a U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The Taliban, familiar with mountain caves and dirt paths in remote terrain, are a useful ally against ISIS, which is viewed by the U.S. as the greatest threat emanating from Afghanistan, the official said.

In justifying his withdrawal decision, Biden noted that terror threats are “metastasizing around the globe” and that “keeping thousands of troops ground-

ed and concentrated in just one country, at the cost of billions each year, makes little sense to me and our leaders.”

The withdrawal is under way, with the final phase starting Saturday. By Sept. 11, America will have withdrawn its last 2,500 to 3,500 troops, and about 7,000 allied forces from NATO are following the same timetable.

But there are concerns about ISIS re-emerging, particularly if the Taliban and the Afghan government can’t reach a power-sharing deal. Intra-Afghan peace talks remain stalled, despite U.S. efforts to jump start them.

Ongoing fighting between the Taliban and the government could further erode the morale of Afghanistan’s 300,000-plus security forces who sustain heavy casualties daily and are plagued by widespread corruption. It’s unclear how the troops can be a bulwark against new terrorist threats.

At the same time, ISIS continues to recruit among radicalized university students and disgruntled Taliban, said a former Afghan security official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

Evan Kohlmann, a terrorism consultant, said for a while it appeared the ISIS presence in Afghanistan and surrounding regions “was all but dead,” but the group’s operations “have since resumed in earnest.”

“They represent a significant terrorist threat, but their tactics remain in the realm of assassination and sabotage,” said Kohlmann, who has worked with the FBI and the Nine Eleven Finding Answers Foundation that emerged following the assaults on America.

“They don’t seem to be in a strong position of conquering and holding territory,” or of threatening the U.S., he said.

The Taliban say they have made good on promises to the U.S. by ordering fighters to keep non-Afghans from their ranks, and telling al-Qaida to leave the region. Some analysts say they’re not convinced the Taliban have distanced themselves from groups like al-Qaida.

U.S. officials, meanwhile, acknowledge the withdrawal will reduce Washington’s intelligence gathering capacities, even if ISIS and al-Qaida aren’t in a position to attack U.S. targets from Afghanistan.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Army says vaccine demand outstrips supply

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

ATLANTA — The Pentagon later this week will lift its pause on administering the Johnson and Johnson coronavirus vaccine as it seeks to increase its supply amid increasing demand for the inoculations among service members, defense officials said Monday.

The Defense Department plans to restart its use of the single-shot vaccination after federal health officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration on Friday recommended the government end a pause in its use for safety concerns, said John Kirby, the Pentagon's chief spokesman. Health officials, following the 11-day pause, determined the J&J shot's "known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks," following reports of rare blood clots in women younger than 50 years old.

"DOD will ensure that all recip-

ients of the vaccine are aware of all known side effects and the potential risks before they receive it," Kirby told reporters Monday at the Pentagon.

The Defense Department has about 100,000 doses of the J&J vaccine, he said. The return to the use of that vaccine should help Pentagon officials distribute inoculations to troops serving in remote and austere locations primarily in the Asia, eastern Europe, Africa, and Central and South America, other defense officials said Monday.

The J&J vaccine is easier to transport because it can be stored at regular refrigeration temperatures for several months, whereas the versions produced by Pfizer and Moderna require much colder storage and transportation temperatures. Its single dose application is also beneficial for troops forward deployed in locations where is more difficult to send supplies, said Army Brig. Gen.

Matthew Smith, who leads the Army's vaccination operations.

The Army has seen an uptick recently in demand for vaccination amongst its soldiers, Smith said. The news is welcomed to top service officials who have encouraged U.S. troops to volunteer for the coronavirus inoculations. While the Pentagon can make vaccinations fully cleared by the FDA mandatory for troops, it cannot do so for the coronavirus vaccinations while they are authorized only on an emergency basis, unless the president orders it mandatory. President Joe Biden, so far, has ignored calls from some lawmakers to mandate troops receive coronavirus inoculations.

The Pentagon has already administered more than 88% of the coronavirus vaccine doses it now possesses, amid the increasing demand, Smith said, noting all troops, their family members and DOD civilian employees are now eligible for the shots.

"At this point, the demand far outstrips the supply," Smith said Monday.

As of Wednesday, about 765,000 U.S. troops — roughly 35% of the force, including the National Guard and reservists — had received at least one coronavirus shot, according to Pentagon data. In the Army, 144,746 soldiers had been fully vaccinated and another 136,614 soldiers were partially vaccinated, the data shows.

"Every senior [Army] commander out there across the globe, in the continental United States and overseas, wants to protect their force," Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, the Army's surgeon general, told reporters Monday. "The contacts I get directly from those commanders is: 'I want more. I want more.' Every commander wants it. Everyone wants it yesterday."

The Army officials declined to say Monday how many soldiers had explicitly turned down oppor-

tunities to receive the vaccinations, which they said the Army is not tracking.

However, Dingle said he had seen anecdotal evidence that at least some soldiers who were initially hesitant to receive the jabs had changed their minds, including many working coronavirus-related missions, including administering vaccines.

"We're visiting every installation, and we're talking to soldiers and leaders [and] medical professionals," he said. "You hear from some who have questions, who think maybe they should not get it because ... they're so young. And, then, we hear from some of those young soldiers who say they were convinced to take it after seeing how important it was or how happy it made some of the people they see getting the vaccines. It's powerful."

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US bases in Japan await word on putting J&J shot back to work

BY JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. military in Japan reported another six people, all in Okinawa, had contracted the coronavirus as of 6 p.m. Tuesday.

As coronavirus case numbers fall to single digits at its bases, U.S. Forces Japan expects to put the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine back into circulation now that federal authorities and the Pentagon have cleared it for use.

Meanwhile, Japan's two largest cities reported more than 2,000 new coronavirus patients — 828 in Tokyo and 1,231 in Osaka prefecture — according to public broadcaster NHK. It was Osaka's second-highest one-day new patient count during the pandemic thus far. Another 14 people died in the prefecture, the second-largest metro area in Japan.

Tokyo, Osaka prefecture and two of its neighboring prefectures are in states of emergency with stiff measures aimed at preventing the virus' continued spread during the Golden Week holiday that starts Thursday and ends May 5. The nine rail lines in Tokyo announced reduced schedules for the holiday, NHK reported Tuesday.

On Okinawa, Kadena Air Base said six people have tested positive for COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, since Friday, according to a base Facebook post. Four were already quarantined after recent travel outside of Japan;

the remaining two were close contacts of a previously identified coronavirus patient.

One of those two patients is a Kadena commissary employee, according to the Facebook post.

Since March 30, Kadena has reported four commissary employees have contracted COVID-19. Each time, the base reports that it has thoroughly cleaned and sanitized the affected work areas. In the March case, the base said the person had no contact with customers.

On Tuesday, the base said public health authorities have completed contact tracing and an unspecified number of close contacts were quarantined.

Also Tuesday, a spokesman for U.S. Forces Japan said the command is ready to put its supply of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine to use as soon as it receives further instructions from higher headquarters.

"(W)e are awaiting further guidance regarding the re-institution of the J&J vaccine in Japan and any stipulations there may be with it," Marine Staff Sgt. Jonathan Wright said in an email Tuesday to Stars and Stripes. "During this time, installations continue to offer the Moderna vaccine and have continued with inoculations per individual installation supplies and schedules. When guidance is received it will be reviewed and any specific points that need further clarifica-



YOHEI FUKUYAMA/AP

People walk through an underground shopping arcade which is closed due to emergency measures in Osaka, western Japan, on Sunday.

tion will be addressed before disseminating to the component commands."

A spokesman for U.S. Forces Korea, which also received supplies of the J&J vaccine, did not reply to an email inquiry from Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

The Defense Department plans to put the shot into play again later this week, primarily at bases overseas, where it shipped 100,000 doses before the J&J vaccine was put on hold April 14, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters Monday in Washington, D.C.

"DOD will ensure all recipients of the vaccine are aware of all known side effects and potential risks before they receive it," he said.

Two federal agencies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Ad-

ministration, recommended pausing use of the vaccine after six people out of more than 6 million inoculated with it developed extremely rare but severe blood clots.

The FDA and CDC on Friday said they reviewed those cases and recommended resuming use of the vaccine. They prepared a fact-sheet for caregivers and recipients outlining the vaccine risks.

In Japan, where U.S. bases relied predominantly on the two-shot Moderna vaccine, the J&J pause nonetheless created delays. At Misawa Air Base, the hold meant a shot clinic scheduled April 16 to administer 1,900 doses was canceled.

Meanwhile, the base obtained a supply of Moderna vaccine and administered it at a shot clinic Tuesday, a base spokesman said that

day.

"We will resume the administration of Johnson and Johnson vaccines after we receive further guidance and approval to do so here in Japan," Maj. Cody Chiles said in an email. "Public Health issued more than 500 doses of the Moderna vaccine to Department of Defense beneficiaries at Misawa AB today."

A spokesman for Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo repeated the message posted Monday on the base Facebook page stating the base awaits further guidance on how to proceed.

"We will make a public notification once we have full clarification," Lt. Stuart Thrift said in an email to Stars and Stripes.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Local national workers might get vaccines on bases

By **KENT HARRIS**
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Thousands of Europeans employed by the U.S. military could be vaccinated against COVID-19 on U.S. bases in the coming weeks, in a move that would better protect American military communities and help allies struggling to inoculate their citizens.

“We’re talking about people who will be interacting with the U.S. community,” said Lt. Cmdr. Russ Wolfkiel, a U.S. European Command spokesman. “These are definitely the kind of people you’d want to have vaccinated.”

But not all local nationals with military ID cards will be eligible to receive vaccinations, Wolfkiel said. Those directly employed by the United States and eligible dependents will be able to get them, while those working for third-party contractors will probably not be eligible, he said.

Hundreds of local nationals who work for the U.S. military in Europe, in fields that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say should be given priority for vaccination, have already had at least one shot.

European spouses of active-duty or retired service members may also have had at least one shot, Wolfkiel said, though that number isn’t tracked beyond the local level.

Commands must get approval from local governments and the process can get complicated, he said.

At Aviano, for instance, a last-minute bureaucratic hurdle meant that about 540 of roughly 700 local nationals who thought they would be vaccinated Friday didn’t get the shots, the newspaper *Messaggero Veneto* reported.

Officials from the two unions representing Italians on base — *Unione Italiana Lavoratori Turismo Commercio Servizi* and *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* — have asked the commissioner in charge of coordinating Italy’s vaccination campaign, Lt. Gen. Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, to intervene.

The unions did not respond to a request for comment, but in January, they spoke in favor of Italian workers being

vaccinated on U.S. bases as long as they received the same guarantees as they would under the Italian health care system.

The number of Americans at Aviano who haven’t yet received a first shot has shrunk dramatically in recent weeks.

The base had administered 4,400 first shots of the Moderna vaccine as of the middle of last week, and more than 2,000 second doses. Roughly 6,000 Americans are eligible to receive the shot at Aviano.

In addition to hundreds of available slots on Friday, the base invited Americans who didn’t yet have appointments to visit Hangar 1 to get inoculated Monday afternoon.

Staff Sgt. Valerie Halbert, a base spokeswoman, declined to speculate on how many Americans at Aviano might still want the shot, noting that some personnel are deployed.

The 31st Medical Group has not received any reports of severe reactions to vaccines, she said.

If the base mirrors statistics from the U.S., much of the remaining base population might not be interested in getting vaccinated. About a third of DOD personnel are declining to be immunized, the head of the Defense Health agency said in late February.

There is anecdotal evidence, however, that initially hesitant service members have changed their minds, Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, the Army’s surgeon general, told reporters Monday. Dingle declined to disclose exact figures on vaccine refusals.

The University of Oxford’s *Our World in Data* website shows that around 42% of Americans who are eligible for the vaccine have received at least one dose, compared with around 22% in Italy and a quarter of the population of Germany, which is home to several large U.S. military communities.

Nearly half those eligible to be vaccinated in the United Kingdom, where there are numerous U.S. Air Force units, have had at least one dose of the vaccine, according to the data, which are updated daily.

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RAFIQ MAQBOOL/AP

Health workers stand on the back of an ambulance as they transport patients at the Jumbo COVID-19 field hospital in Mumbai, India, on Monday.

Medical students in India feel betrayed amid surge

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Since the beginning of the week, Dr. Siddharth Tara, a postgraduate medical student at New Delhi’s government-run Hindu Rao Hospital, has had a fever and persistent headache. He took a COVID-19 test, but the results have been delayed as the country’s health system implodes.

His hospital, overburdened and understaffed, wants him to keep working until the testing laboratory confirms he has COVID-19.

On Tuesday, India reported 323,144 new infections for a total of more than 17.6 million cases, behind only the United States. India’s Health Ministry also reported another 2,771 deaths in the past 24 hours, with 115 Indians succumbing to the disease every hour. Experts say those figures

are likely an undercount.

“I am not able to breathe. In fact, I’m more symptomatic than my patients. So how can they make me work?” asked Tara.

The challenges facing India today, as cases rise faster than anywhere else in the world, are being compounded by the fragility of its health system and its doctors.

There are 541 medical colleges in India with 36,000 post-graduate medical students who, according to doctors’ unions, constitute the majority at any government hospitals — they are the bulwark of the India’s COVID-19 response. But for over a year, they have been subjected to mammoth workloads, lack of pay, rampant exposure to the virus and complete academic neglect.

“We’re cannon fodder, that’s all,” said Tara.

In five states that are being hit hardest by the surge, postgraduate doctors have held protests against what they view as administrators’ callous attitude toward students like them, who urged authorities to prepare for a second wave but were ignored.

Jignesh Gengadiya, a 26-year-old postgraduate medical student, knew he’d be working 24 hours a day, seven days a week when he signed up for a residency at the Government Medical College in the city of Surat in Gujarat state. What he didn’t expect was to be the only doctor taking care of 60 patients in normal circumstances, and 20 patients on duty in the intensive care unit.

“ICU patients require constant attention. If more than one patient starts collapsing, who do I attend to?” asked Gengadiya.

VA sees drop in demand for vaccines

By **NIKKI WENTLING**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Tens of thousands fewer veterans are seeking coronavirus vaccines from the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to just two weeks ago, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said Monday.

Earlier this month, between 50,000 to 75,000 veterans were getting vaccinated every day. As of Friday, distribution dropped to between 25,000 to 30,000 vaccinations per day, McDonough said. The drop in demand, which is reflective of the rest of the U.S. population, has prompted the department to increase its commu-

nication to veterans about the importance of getting vaccinated.

“We are seeing demand lag,” McDonough said during a news briefing. “It underscores the importance of us continuing to make the case for vaccination.”

As of last week, more than half of adults in the United States had received at least one vaccine dose, and President Joe Biden touted reaching the goal of 200 million shots administered during his first 100 days in office.

Biden’s administration now faces the challenge of combating vaccine hesitancy, however. The average daily number of vaccinations fell last week to below 3

million, down from a high of 3.4 million, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About 9 million veterans are enrolled in VA health care. As of Monday, the VA had fully vaccinated more than 2.5 million people. Black veterans are getting vaccinated at the highest rates, with 40% vaccinated so far, followed by 38% of Asian veterans, 36% of Native Hawaiian veterans, 36% of Hispanic veterans, 35% of white veterans and 26% of American Indian veterans.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

COVID: New treatment under development

FROM PAGE 1

ernment's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, recently told the National Press Club.

The biggest need is for a convenient medicine such as a pill "that can prevent people with symptoms from getting worse and needing hospitalization," he said.

Here's a look at what's on the horizon and the options now.

A pill on the way?

Developing drugs for respiratory diseases is tough, partly because doses have to be high enough for the medicine to reach deep into the lungs yet not so high that they're toxic.

Research on treatments also was slower because the U.S. government initially gave priority to vaccines. It wasn't until the end of April 2020 that the first COVID-19 treatment showed benefit in a big government-sponsored study.

That drug — remdesivir, sold as Veklury by Gilead Sciences Inc. — remains the only one approved for COVID-19 in the United States, though some others, such as the one Medina received, are authorized for emergency use.

Remdesivir is also the only antiviral COVID-19 medicine — it interferes with virus reproduction — and "we really, really need a bunch more," National Institutes of Health Director Dr. Francis Collins said at a recent seminar.

Several companies, including Pfizer, Roche and AstraZeneca, are testing antivirals in pill form. The one that is farthest along is molnupiravir, from Merck and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics. It doesn't seem to help hospitalized patients but shows promise in less sick ones, and a large study should give results this fall, the companies said.

If it pans out, it could be taken at home when symptoms first ap-

pear, similar to how antiviral drugs for the flu are used now. The NIH is also seeking a home-use option in a study that is testing up to seven drugs already used for other diseases.

Even vaccines are being tried as treatments. Some people with "long COVID" said their lingering symptoms improved after vaccination.

Options for outpatients

There's one choice now: Antibody drugs, which can cut the chances of needing to be hospitalized by 70% if given within 10 days of the start of symptoms. Eli Lilly and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals are authorized to supply their treatments to patients at high risk of serious illness, and the U.S. government provides them for free, though there is sometimes a fee for the IV.

Antibodies are made by the immune system to fight the virus, but it takes weeks after infection for them to form. The drugs supply lab-made versions that can help right away. Combinations of antibodies are being used now because some virus variants can evade single ones.

Demand for these drugs has been shockingly low — many patients don't know about them, doctors and hospitals initially weren't set up to give them and IVs are inconvenient, though Regeneron has also tested giving its treatment as shots.

"This is really life-saving therapy. We think it has tremendous opportunity to be used more," said Dr. Donald Yealy, emergency medicine chief at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

"You don't have to be really sick" to get it, and many patients hesitate because they think they will recover without it, but suddenly get worse, he said.

It happened to Medina, a labor and delivery nurse at Long Island

Jewish Medical Center in New York.

"When I thought I'd be getting better, things actually started getting worse," she said. "It was very scary. I felt very short of breath. I could barely speak."

Her hospital arranged for her to get the antibody treatment at nearby North Shore University Hospital, which had a medical tent with IV stations to treat many people at once, and she recovered at home.

Hospital-based treatment

The severity of symptoms determines the options, and timing matters — certain drugs can be life-saving at one point and harmful at another.

Remdesivir is used for patients who need extra oxygen but not breathing machines. In studies, it cut the time to recovery by five days on average, from 15 days to 10. But it hasn't been shown to improve survival, so a World Health Organization guidelines panel opposes use of the pricey drug.

The only medicines that do boost survival are dexamethasone and similar steroids for patients sick enough to need extra oxygen and intensive care. If used earlier, when patients are only mildly ill, they can do harm.

"Early on, you want the immune system to fight the virus," so treatment is aimed at helping that happen, Fauci explained. As illness goes on, the immune system may become overactive and people can die from that. A host of drugs that blunt inflammation and other immune responses are being tried out for this later stage of the illness.

The NIH says full doses of blood thinners such as heparin may help people who are moderately ill avoid breathing machines or other organ support. Nearly all hospitalized COVID-19 patients get low doses now to prevent blood clots.



MARSHALL RITZEL/AP

Priscila Medina stands with her husband, Jason Sanchez, and her son in Queens in New York on April 7.

Research suggests that higher doses can help people who are not yet critically ill, but could harm those who are very sick.

Lessons learned

Doctors now know that some things don't work, including the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine. That can be as important as knowing what to try, said the Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Adarsh Bhimraj, who helps develop treatment guidelines for the Infectious Dis-

eases Society of America. "We still have misinformation about COVID-19 therapies" that is misleading patients and doctors alike, he said.

Dr. Rajesh Gandhi, a Massachusetts General Hospital physician also helping with guidelines, said "tremendous scientific progress" has been made in one year. Doctors no longer need to take "a kitchen sink approach," or trying many things in the hope that one will help, he said.

CDC alters mask guidelines

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eased its guidelines Tuesday on the wearing of masks outdoors, saying fully vaccinated Americans don't need to cover their faces anymore unless they are in a big crowd of strangers.

And those who are unvaccinated can go outside without masks in

some situations, too.

The new guidance represents another carefully calibrated step on the road back to normal from the coronavirus outbreak that has killed over 570,000 people in U.S.

For most of the past year, the CDC had been advising Americans to wear masks outdoors if they are within 6 feet of one another.

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NATION

US sees slowest population growth since 1930s

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER
AND NICHOLAS RICCARDI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. population growth has slowed to the lowest rate since the Great Depression, the Census Bureau said, as Americans continued their march to the South and West and onetime engines of growth, New York and California, lost political influence.

Altogether, the U.S. population rose to 331,449,281 last year, the Census Bureau said Monday, a 7.4% increase over the previous decade that was the second slowest ever. Experts say that paltry pace reflects the combination of an aging population, slowing immigration and the scars of the Great Recession more than a decade ago, which led many young adults to delay marriage and families.

The new allocation of congressional seats comes in the first release of data from last year's headcount. The numbers generally chart familiar American migration patterns: Texas and Florida, two Republican Sunbelt giants, added enough population to gain congressional seats as chillier climes like New York and Ohio saw slow growth and lost political muscle.

The report also confirms one historic marker: For the first time in 170 years of statehood, California is losing a congressional seat, a result of slowed migration to the nation's most populous state, which was once a symbol of the country's expansive frontier.

The state population figures, known as the apportionment count, determine distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year. They also mark the official beginning of once-a-decade redistricting battles. The numbers released Monday, along with more detailed data expected later this year, will be



MARK LENNIHAN/AP

People walk on the street Monday in New York. U.S. population growth has slowed to the lowest rate since the Great Depression, the Census Bureau said Monday. New York is among the states that will lose one seat in Congress as a result of national population shifts, according to census data released Monday.

used by state legislatures or independent commissions to redraw political maps to account for shifts in population.

It's been a bumpy road getting this far. The 2020 census faced a once-in-a-century coronavirus pandemic, wildfires, hurricanes, allegations of political interference with the Trump administration's failed effort to add a citizenship question, fluctuating deadlines and lawsuits.

Texas was the biggest winner — the second-most populous state added two congressional seats, while Florida and North Carolina each gained one. Colorado, Montana and Oregon all added residents and gained a seat each. States losing seats included Illinois, Michigan,

Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The new numbers contain some surprises. Though Texas and Florida grew, the final census count had them each gaining one fewer seat than expected. Arizona, another fast-growing state that demographers considered a sure bet to pick up a new seat, failed to get one. All three states have large Latino populations that represent about half their growth, and this could be an early sign that Hispanics shied away from the Trump administration's count.

Still, Thomas Saenz, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said he wasn't ready to "sound the alarm" over the underperformance of

states with large Hispanic populations. He noted that he believes Hispanic growth helped states like Colorado and Oregon each gain seats and prevented states like New York and Illinois from losing more.

Congressional reapportionment is a zero sum game, with states divvying up 435 House seats based on population advantages that can be strikingly small. If New York had counted 89 more residents, it would have kept its seat and Minnesota would have lost one, officials said. Minnesota, which had the nation's highest self-response rate, also secured the last House seat in 2010.

The reshuffling of the congressional map moved seats from blue states to red ones, giving Republi-

cans a clear, immediate advantage. The party will have complete control of drawing congressional maps in Texas, Florida and North Carolina — states that are adding four seats. In contrast, though Democrats control the process in Oregon, Democratic lawmakers there have agreed to give Republicans an equal say in redistricting in exchange for a commitment to stop blocking bills. In Democratic Colorado, a nonpartisan commission will draw the lines, meaning the party won't have total control in a single expanding state's redistricting.

The overall numbers confirm what demographers have long warned — that the country's growth is stalling. Many had expected growth to come in even below the 1930s levels given the long hangover of the Great Recession and the drying up of immigration.

William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., warned that even a recovering economy may not change the trend with the population aging rapidly and immigration contentious. "Unlike the Great Depression, it's part of a process where we're likely to keep having slow growth," Frey said.

Meanwhile, Americans continue to move to GOP-run states. For now, that shift provides the Republicans with the opportunity to shape new congressional districts to maximize the influence of their voters and have a major advantage in upcoming elections — possibly enough to win back control of the U.S. House.

But in the long term, it's not clear the migration is good news for Republicans. Many of the fastest growing states are competitive political battlegrounds where the new arrivals — including many young people and people of color — could at some point give Democrats an edge.

Biden plan for cleaner power system faces daunting obstacles

BY CATHY BUSSEWITZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — If the nation is to meet President Joe Biden's goal of cutting America's greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade, it will have to undertake a vast transformation toward renewable energy.

And to achieve that, the near-impossible will be required: A broad network of transmission lines will have to be built to carry solar and wind power across the continent to deliver electricity to homes and businesses — something the administration envisions accomplishing by 2035.

What's more, utility-scale batteries on a widespread scale, to store renewable energy for peak-use periods, would be needed.

The financial and technological tasks of linking cleaner power



Biden

mount to fight the build-outs of transmission lines in their areas, and the challenges become extraordinary.

It normally takes years to win authorization to build new transmission lines. Because many such decisions are made at the local level, critics across the country who oppose having wires strung through their landscapes could further prolong the battles.

"I'm very worried," said Larry Gasteiger, executive director of the transmission industry trade group

sources to an aging electric grid pummeled by climate change are daunting enough. Add to them the legal fights that states and localities will likely

WIRES. "Given the timeframes we're looking at, it's almost hard to see how we meet them. We really need to have everyone pulling on the oars at the same time and in the same direction, and unfortunately, we're not seeing that, to be honest."

The idea behind the Biden plan for cleaner power transmission is to transform the fuel for America's power grid from mostly coal and natural gas to wind, solar and hydroelectric power. The U.S. electricity system relies on about 600,000 miles of transmission lines that carry electricity from power plants or dams to communities and 5.5 million miles of local distribution lines, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Some of the consequences of climate change — more frequent storms, wildfires and other extreme weather — include damage to the

nation's electric grid. Severe weather was determined to be the predominant cause of more than 300 transmission outage events from 2014 to 2018, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. An additional 200 outages were caused by transmission disruptions or interruptions, which are essentially unexpected failures. Most of the nation's transmission lines were strung in the mid-20th century with just a 50-year life expectancy, the group said.

That reality hit hard in February. Severe snowstorms in Texas caused deadly power outages that lasted days, killing more than 100 people. In California, Pacific Gas & Electric's crumbling equipment sparked a series of deadly wildfires in recent years, and the worst, in the town of Paradise, killed 85 people in 2018.

Given the state of the electric grid and the ambitious nature of the goals, Gasteiger calls Biden's emissions goal, with its dependence on transmission lines, a "moonshot effort."

To reach the president's goal of a 50% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, the nation would have to stop using coal entirely by then and let consumption of oil and gas decline by 2% every year, according to Philip Verleger, a longtime energy analyst. Yet to meet the nation's energy demand, he said, the U.S. would have to double the amount of energy that's produced annually by wind and solar.

"I doubt that's practical," Verleger said. "You just can't put up that many windmills that fast. And there may not be that many places to put windmills."

NATION



Nic Coury / AP

Organizers of the recall effort against California Gov. Gavin Newsom have collected enough valid signatures to qualify for the ballot.

Calif. recall has enough signatures to make ballot

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Organizers of the recall effort against California Gov. Gavin Newsom collected enough valid signatures to qualify for the ballot, state election officials said Monday, likely triggering just the second such election in state history.

“The people of California have done what the politicians thought would be impossible,” said Orrin Heatlie, the retired county sheriff’s sergeant who launched the recall effort last year. “Our work is just beginning. Now the real campaign is about to commence.”

Heatlie spearheaded the signature collection effort that began last June and then picked up momentum in the fall as frustration grew over Newsom’s coronavirus-related actions. The California secretary of state’s office said more than 1.6 million signatures had been deemed valid as of Monday, about 100,000 more than required.

People who signed petitions now have 30 days to withdraw their signatures, though it’s unlikely enough will do so to stop the question from going to voters.

The recall against Newsom, a first-term Democrat seen as a possible White House hopeful someday, will be among the highest-profile political races in the country this year. He launched a campaign to fight the effort in March alongside endorsements from Democrats including U.S. Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. So far no other Democrats have jumped in to run against him.

“I am not going to take this fight lying down,” read a fundraising appeal sent by Newsom shortly after Monday’s announcement about the signatures. “There is too much at stake, and I intend to win.”

His campaign manager, Juan Rodriguez, repeated criticism that the campaign is a partisan effort by pro-Trump Republicans that “seeks to undo the important progress we’ve made under Governor Newsom — fighting COVID, supporting families who are struggling, protecting our environment, common-sense gun safety laws.”

An election is likely in the fall and voters would face two questions: Should Newsom be recalled and who should replace him? The votes on the second question will only be counted if more than half say yes to the first.

If Newsom survives the recall he will be up for reelection in 2022.

Republicans running to replace Newsom include former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and reality TV star and former Olympic decathlon champion Caitlyn Jenner, who has never run for elected office. Businessman John Cox, who lost badly to Newsom in 2018, and former Congressman Doug Ose, also are running.

Dozens of other candidates, serious and not, are expected to enter the race.

The only other time a governor has faced a recall election was in 2003, when Democrat Gray Davis was voted out and replaced with Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Democrats believe Davis was hurt politically when Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante, a fellow Democrat, entered the race.

Newsom won election in 2018 with support from more than 60% of the voters. Recalling him will be a tough sell in the heavily Democratic state where just a quarter of the state’s registered voters are Republicans, about the same number as those who identify as “no party preference.”

Biden set to raise minimum wage for federal contractors

By JOSH BOAK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden is set to sign an executive order to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for federal contractors, providing a pay bump to hundreds of thousands of workers.

Biden administration officials said ahead of Tuesday’s signing that the higher wages would lead to greater worker productivity, offsetting any additional costs to taxpayers.

“This executive order will promote economy and efficiency in federal contracting, providing value for taxpayers by enhancing worker productivity and generating higher-quality work by boosting workers’ health, morale, and effort,” the White House said in a statement.

The officials could not provide an exact figure on how many workers for federal contractors would receive a raise, only that it would be hundreds of thousands. There are an estimated 5 million contract workers in the federal government, according to a posting last year for the Brookings Institution by Paul Light, a public policy professor at New York University.

The increase could be dramatic for workers who earn the current minimum of \$10.95 an hour. Those

workers would receive a 37% pay hike, though the increase would be rolled out gradually, according to the terms of the order.

The White House said the workers would include cleaning professionals and maintenance workers, nursing assistants who care for veterans, cafeteria workers providing for the military and laborers who build and repair federal infrastructure.

All federal agencies would need to include the higher wage in new contract offerings by Jan. 30 of next year. By March 30, agencies would need to implement the higher wage into new contracts. The increase would also be in existing contracts that are extended.

The wage would be indexed to inflation, so it would automatically increase with each year to reflect changes in prices. The tipped minimum wage of \$7.65 an hour for federal contractors would be replaced by the standard minimum by 2024.

Biden has pushed to establish a \$15 hourly minimum wage nationwide for all workers, making it a part of his coronavirus relief package. But the Senate parliamentarian said the wage hike did not follow the budgetary rules that allowed the \$1.9 trillion plan to pass with a simple majority, so it was not included in the bill that became law in March.

NY’s Cuomo claims he did nothing wrong in first open press conference in months

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — In his first face-to-face encounter with journalists in months, Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday flatly denied he had done anything inappropriate with any of the women who have accused him of sexual misconduct and harassment.

Speaking to reporters at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse, the Democrat abandoned his past approach of expressing contrition for some past behavior while declining to address whether specific allegations were true.

“You were in those rooms. You know the truth. So can you tell the people of the state of New York yes or no? Did you do the things you were accused of?” asked New York Times reporter Jesse McKinley.

“To put it very simply, no,” Cuomo said.

“All the groping, the sexual harassment, you deny all of that?” McKinley said.

“That’s right. Yes,” Cuomo said.

Several current and former state employees and other women have accused Cuomo of making unwanted sexual remarks and advances, giving them unwanted kisses or touching them inappropriately.

One female aide said Cuomo groped her breasts after summoning her to his official residence.

Before Monday, Cuomo had re-



N. SCOTT TRIMBLE, SYRACUSE (N.Y.) POST-STANDARD/ AP

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks during a news conference Monday at the New York State Fair Grounds in Syracuse, N.Y.

peatedly denied he touched anyone inappropriately. He’s said “sorry” for making some people uncomfortable with comments or gestures he claimed were playful.

Cuomo has said he likes to hug and kiss people because of his Italian-American heritage.

Asked if he would consider disciplining himself or resigning if the state attorney general, who is investigating the claims, reports he did harass women, Cuomo dismissed that possibility.

“The report can’t say anything different because I didn’t do anything wrong,” Cuomo said.

This was the first time Cuomo has allowed a group of journalists to question him in person since sexual harassment allegations surfaced in December.

For months, citing COVID-19 precautions, he has taken questions only via telephone or internet conference calls — forums where his staff can control who asks questions and journalists often aren’t allowed to ask follow-up queries.

Cuomo has defied calls for his resignation from many of New York’s most influential Democrats, including most members of the state’s congressional delegation and a majority of state lawmakers.

He has urged the public to await the results of investigations being conducted by Attorney General Letitia James and the state Assembly’s judiciary committee, which is exploring whether there are grounds to impeach him.

NATION



STEPHEN M. KATZ, THE (NORFOLK, VA.) VIRGINIAN-PILOT/AP

A demonstrator holds up a flag in Elizabeth City, N.C., on Monday, to protest the killing of Andrew Brown Jr. Brown was shot in the back of the head by deputies in North Carolina and had his hands on his steering wheel when they opened fire, attorneys for his family said after relatives viewed body camera footage.

Attorney: Black man killed by deputies shot in back of head

Associated Press

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. — A Black man killed by deputies in North Carolina was shot in the back of the head and had his hands on his car steering wheel when they opened fire, attorneys for his family said Monday after relatives viewed body camera footage.

The account was the first description of the shooting of Andrew Brown Jr., who was killed by deputies serving drug-related search and arrest warrants. His death last Wednesday led to nightly protests and demands for justice in the town of Elizabeth City. Authorities have released few details, and the video has not been made public.

Attorney Chantel Cherry-Lassiter watched a 20-second portion of body camera video with Brown's family. Lassiter said Brown did not appear to be a threat to officers as he

backed his vehicle out of his driveway and tried to drive away from deputies with guns drawn.

"There was no time in the 20 seconds that we saw where he was threatening the officers in any kind of way," she told reporters at a news conference.

When asked whether Brown was shot in the back, attorney Harry Daniels said, "Yes, back of the head."

An eyewitness account and emergency scanner traffic had previously indicated Brown was shot in the back as he tried to drive away.

"My dad got executed just by trying to save his own life," said Brown's adult son Khalil Ferebee, who watched the video.

Lassiter, who watched the video multiple times and took notes, said the shooting started as soon as the video began and that she lost count of the number of gunshots fired by

law enforcement officers armed with rifles and handguns. She said she counted as many as eight deputies in the video, some wearing tactical uniforms and some in plain clothes.

"They're shooting and saying, 'Let me see your hands' at the same time," she said. She added: "Let's be clear. This was an execution."

Pasquotank County Sheriff Tommy Wooten II has said that multiple deputies fired shots. Seven deputies are on leave pending a probe by the State Bureau of Investigation.

In a video statement, the sheriff said Monday that Pasquotank County Attorney R. Michael Cox had filed a request to have the video released, which in North Carolina must be authorized by a judge. He asked for patience while the State Bureau of Investigation probes the case.

Venezuela leader courts Biden as US weighs policy

By JOSHUA GOODMAN
Associated Press

MIAMI — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government is intensifying efforts to court the Biden administration as the U.S. president weighs whether to risk a political backlash in Florida and ease up on sanctions seeking to isolate the socialist leader.

In the past two weeks, Maduro conceded to long-standing U.S. demands that the World Food Program be allowed to establish a foothold in the country at a time of growing hunger. His allies also vowed to work with the U.S.-backed opposition to vaccinate Venezuelans against the coronavirus and have met with diplomats from Norway trying to revive negotiations to end the country's never-ceasing political strife.

The frenzy of activity comes as senior U.S. officials are reviewing policy toward Venezuela. An interagency meeting, which was originally scheduled to take place Monday but was postponed at the last minute, will focus on whether the U.S. should take steps to support an uncertain attempt at dialogue between Maduro and his opponents, said two people who insisted on anonymity to discuss classified matters.

"All these recent movements points to Maduro trying to get Washington's attention," said Geoffrey Ramsey, a Venezuela watcher at the Washington Office on Latin America. "The question is whether the White House is ready to commit to a full-fledged negotiations strategy, or whether it will continue to play it safe and keep the policy on the back burner."

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza and Jorge Rodriguez, the head of the pro-Maduro congress and a key promoter of dialogue, wouldn't comment when asked about the recent moves by Maduro.

Ramsey said even more goodwill gestures could be on the horizon.

Tuesday is the deadline for a committee in the Maduro-controlled congress to present a list of candidates for the National Electoral Council. Behind the scenes, moderates aligned with former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles have been meeting with Maduro representatives to push for the inclusion of two opposition rectors on the five-member board. If the demand is met, it could pave the way for Maduro's opponents to participate in mayoral and gubernatorial elections later this year.

Also in the mix is the future of several American citizens jailed in Venezuela. In recent months, former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson has pressed Maduro and senior aides to release six former executives at Houston-based CITGO who U.S. officials believe are unjustly imprisoned as well as two former Green Berets who participated in a failed raid last year staged from Colombia and a former U.S. Marine being held on unrelated allegations.

So far, the posturing by Maduro has failed to impress officials in Washington. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has described Maduro as a "brutal dictator" and vowed to continue recognizing opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's rightful leader — a position shared by more than 50 nations.

Scientists: Up to 25,000 barrels at DDT dump site in Pacific

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Marine scientists say they have found what they believe to be as many as 25,000 barrels that possibly contain DDT dumped off the Southern California coast near Catalina Island, where a massive underwater toxic waste site dating back to World War II has long been suspected.

The 27,345 "barrel-like" images were captured by researchers at the University of California San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography. They mapped more than 36,000 acres of seafloor between Santa Catalina Island and the Los Angeles coast in a region previously found to contain

high levels of the toxic chemical in sediments and in the ecosystem.

Historical shipping logs show that industrial companies in Southern California used the basin as a dumping ground until 1972, when the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, also known as the Ocean Dumping Act, was enacted.

Resting deep in the ocean, the exact location and extent of the dumping was not known until now.

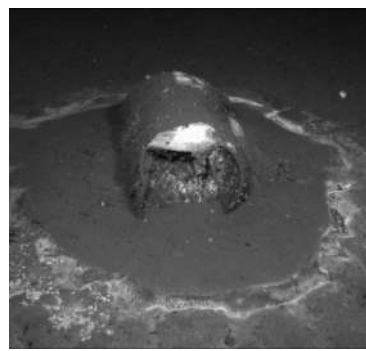
The territory covered was "staggering," said Eric Terrill, chief scientist of the expedition and director of the Marine Physical Laboratory at Scripps Institu-

tion of Oceanography.

Underwater drones using sonar technology captured high-resolution images of barrels resting 3,000 feet below the surface all along the steep seafloor that was surveyed. They also were seen beyond the dumpsite limits.

"It really was a surprise to everybody who's worked with the data and who sailed at sea," he told reporters Monday.

The survey provides "a wide-area map" of the barrels, though it will be up to others to confirm through sediment sampling that the containers hold DDT, Terrill said. It's estimated between 350 and 700 tons of DDT were dumped



AP

A barrel sits on the seafloor near Catalina Island, Calif., in 2011.

in the area, 12 miles from Los Angeles, and 8 miles from Catalina Island.

The long-term impact on marine life and humans is still unknown, said Scripps chemical oceanographer and professor of geosciences Lihini Aluwihare, who in 2015 co-authored a study that found high amounts of DDT and other man-made chemicals in the blubber of bottlenose dolphins that died of natural causes.

"These results also raise questions about the continued exposure and potential impacts on marine mammal health, especially in light of how DDT has been shown to have multi-generational impacts in humans," said Aluwihare, who was not part of the survey expedition.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Teacher may avoid tax hit for grocery fundraising

CT MANSFIELD — A Connecticut teacher who raised more than \$40,000 to help people buy groceries during the pandemic may not be hit with a big tax bill after all.

Louis Goffinet received a form telling him he owed \$16,000 in taxes on the money. But Goffinet told the Hartford Courant that after consulting with experts, he believes the money will be classified as a gift exemption and not taxed.

The 27-year-old middle school teacher began spending some of his own money to pick up groceries for elderly neighbors afraid to go to the store during the early days of the pandemic. He later organized two fundraisers on Facebook, with a donation limit of \$200. Goffinet eventually bought holiday gifts and paid rent for people in need, in addition to groceries.

Canadian teen arrested, accused of bomb threat

LA SOUTH VACHERIE — A 15-year-old youth from Canada has been arrested in Louisiana on a charge accusing him of making a phony bomb threat to an Ivy League university in New Jersey, prompting evacuation of four buildings.

A May 3 hearing is scheduled to decide whether the teen, whose name was not released because of his age, can be sent to Mercer County, N.J., to face a criminal count of second-degree false public alarm, The Times-Picayune / The New Orleans Advocate reported.

Princeton's art museum, chapel, main library and Nassau Hall were evacuated Sept. 19 because of the call naming them, according to a university alert.

St. James Parish Sheriff Willy Martin Jr. said deputies arrested the boy without incident March 24 at his grandparents' house in rural South Vacherie, a community between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Deputy kicks alligator out of backyard pool

FL ST. PETERSBURG — A sheriff's deputy got one of those "only in Florida" calls when she had to wrangle a small alligator out of a backyard swimming pool.

Pinellas County Sheriff's Deputy Heather Harris "played life-guard" in St. Petersburg, the sheriff's office said in a Facebook post.

After posing for a quick selfie with the gator still lurking in the pool, Harris "kicked this guy out," the post said.

In the second photo, Harris was photographed holding the gator, whose snout was taped shut.

Officials said it might be a good idea to take a look in the pool before jumping in.

"It's just another interesting day in Tampa Bay!" the sheriff's



KRISTOPHER RADDER, THE BRATTLEBORO (Vt.) REFORMER/AP

Tractor trails

AJ Egloff, from Lyndon, Mass., and 25 other farmers help plow nearly 50 acres at Tyler Farm, in Vernon, Vt., on Saturday.

office post said.

Volunteers help frogs, salamanders cross road

MA BOSTON — Residents of one Massachusetts town are helping some local amphibians get where they need to be this mating season.

WBZ News Radio reported volunteers in Pepperell are working with the local conservation administrator to assist salamanders and wood frogs who venture out onto local streets at night.

This time of year, salamanders and frogs travel from their winter homes to wetlands where they will mate, making them especially vulnerable to traffic.

Conservation Administrator Paula Terrasi said the volunteers "stand guard and try to let them cross on their own."

Police allege man left explosive at police station

IN TERRE HAUTE — A 50-year-old man was arrested for allegedly leaving an improvised explosive device and causing a fire outside the Terre Haute Police Department.

Curtis T. Hogan of Terre Haute was booked on charges of possession of a destructive device and attempted arson.

A small fire was found outside the station and officers found a gas container converted into an improvised explosive device, police

THE CENSUS

\$1M The approximate amount a West Virginia Wesleyan College alumnus has donated for a new paid research program in science. Charleston attorney John F. McCuskey made the largest one-time gift in the private liberal arts college's 130-year history, The Parkersburg News and Sentinel reported. At least two freshmen and one sophomore will be chosen each year. Applicants for the summer program at the Buckhannon school must be involved in science programs with a focus on biology, chemistry and physics.

said.No one was injured.

Police said Hogan was identified after authorities posted information on social media with surveillance photos.

'Gothic Hanging Jail' reopens for tours

LA DERIDDER — A century-old Louisiana jail called the Gothic Hanging Jail is back open for tours, except when it's raining.

The Beaugard Parish Tourist Commission had halted daytime and lantern tours of the 107-year-old jail with a third-floor gallows because of the coronavirus pandemic and damage from hurricanes Laura and Delta.

"Because of roof and concrete damage done to the jail, we will have to cancel tours on rainy days or nights," Beaugard Parish Tourist Commission Executive Director Lori Darbonne told The American Press.

The concrete jail with walls 1 foot thick opened in 1914. Its gallows was used only on March 9, 1928, for two men who had robbed

and killed a taxi driver, according to an article in the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities publication "64 Parishes."

Police on hunt for escaped wild goat

MN SOUTH ST. PAUL — Police in South St. Paul are trying to corral a wild goat before a driver hits it.

The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported that police believe the goat likely escaped from a livestock market. It's been seen roaming a hillside on the city's eastern side for several months and has attracted a legion of fans on social media.

But police say the goat is becoming more comfortable venturing closer to roads in search of food and have reached out to Farmaste Animal Sanctuary for help in capturing the animal.

Moths that cause itchy rash primed for big year

ME BANGOR — The Maine Forest Service

is warning residents that this could be an especially bad summer for a species of invasive moth that causes an itchy rash in people.

The browntail moth first arrived in Maine a century ago and their caterpillars have poisonous hairs that irritate human skin. Officials said there will be more moths this summer and their range has also expanded, the Bangor Daily News reported.

The moths have been aided by dry spring conditions last year that was followed by a warm fall. That created good conditions for the moths to reproduce and spread.

Man charged with his fourth DUI offense

WI LA CROSSE — A La Crosse man has been charged with driving while intoxicated for a fourth time.

The La Crosse Tribune reported Vernell A. Wilson II, 42, faces one count of fourth-offense operating while intoxicated and operating with a restricted controlled substance, both felonies.

According to a criminal complaint, police received a complaint on June 23 of an erratic driver and found Wilson's car up against a set of barricades. He was slumped over the wheel, sweating and breathing irregularly. He denied using any drugs or alcohol and told police he was tired.

WORLD

Explosive-laden 'drone' boat targets Saudi port of Yanbu

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A remotely piloted boat packed with explosives targeted the Saudi port of Yanbu in the Red Sea on Tuesday, the kingdom said, with the blast sending black smoke into the sky off the coast.

Saudi Arabia claimed to have intercepted and destroyed the attack boat. Private security firms, however, suggested that commercial traffic near the port may have been hit in the assault.

Details remained scarce, but the incident comes after a series of attacks on shipping in the wider Middle East region amid a shadow war between Iran and Israel and against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations between Tehran and world powers over Iran's tattered nuclear deal.

The incident also comes amid the kingdom's yearslong war against Yemen's Houthi rebels. The Houthis have used bomb-laden drones and explosive-packed boats in attacks targeting the kingdom in the past. The rebels did not immediately claim any assaults Tuesday, however, and did not respond to a request for comment.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency quoted Saudi military spokesman Col. Turki al-Maliki as saying the port was targeted by the drone boat.

"The booby-trapped boat was dealt and destroyed according to the rules of engagement," the report quoted al-Maliki as saying, without providing evidence to support his claim.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, run by the British navy, simply said it was "aware of reports of an incident" and that investigations were ongoing. Private maritime security firm Dryad Global said it had reports that a ship had been "attacked," without elaborating.

Maritime security firm Neptune P2P Group reported that black smoke was seen billowing near the south entrance of the Yanbu port.

British maritime security firm Ambrey reported an "incident" off western Saudi Arabia, between the ports of Yanbu and Rabigh. Earlier Tuesday morning, smoke was seen rising from a vessel off the Saudi oil-shipping port of Yanbu, the firm said. Multiple tankers remain anchored or drifting in the area.

Yanbu port control broadcast a message by marine VHF radio, warning vessels to increase their level of alertness and monitor for any suspicious activity, Ambrey said.

The U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet declined to immediately comment on the incident.

Meanwhile, American and Iranian warships had a tense encounter in the Persian Gulf earlier this month, the first such incident in about a year, the U.S. Navy said Tuesday.

Footage released by the Navy showed that a ship commanded by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard cut in front of the USCGC Monomoy, causing the Coast Guard vessel to come to an abrupt stop with its engine smoking on April 2.

The Guard also did the same with another Coast Guard vessel, the USCGC Wrangell, said Cmdr. Rebecca Rebarich, a 5th Fleet spokeswoman. Such close passes risk the ships colliding at sea.

Iran did not immediately acknowledge the incident in the southern reaches of the Persian Gulf, which resulted in no injuries or damage.



RAHMAT GUL/AP

Afghan men stand near damaged buses after a deadly accident on the Kabul-Kandahar highway on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Tuesday.

Bus crash kills at least 7 people in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL — Two buses crashed head-on near Kabul, killing at least seven people and injuring more than 70, an Afghan official said Tuesday.

The traffic accident took place Monday night on a highway linking the Afghan capital and southern Kandahar province, according to Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian.

The buses were going in oppo-

site directions but the cause of the accident was not immediately known, Arian added. He said the injured were transferred to the nearest hospitals for treatment.

In a similar accident last week on the same highway, 14 people were killed and 12 were injured.

Traffic accidents are common in Afghanistan, mainly due to poor road conditions and carelessness of drivers on highways.

Iran nuclear talks resume in Vienna amid new complications

Associated Press

BERLIN — World powers were set to resume high level talks in Vienna on Tuesday focused on bringing the United States back into the nuclear deal with Iran, in their first session since comments surfaced from the Iranian foreign minister alleging that Russia once tried to sabotage the pact.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has thus far refused to comment on the remarks from Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, made in a seven-hour interview with a think tank associated with the Iranian presidency that leaked over the weekend.

Russia's top representative at the Vienna talks, Mikhail Ulya-

nov, who has outwardly been one of the most optimistic about the possibility of getting Tehran and Washington to agree to terms for the U.S. to rejoin the 2015 deal, also made no mention of the allegations before the meetings, saying in a tweet only that "the participants will continue negotiations on restoration of the nuclear deal."

Ulyanov is joining representatives from China, Germany, France and Britain — the other parties to the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA — for the talks chaired by the European Union.

"Participants will continue their discussions in view of a possible return of the United States to

the JCPOA and on how to ensure the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA," the EU delegation said before the talks.

The U.S. is not at the table because it unilaterally pulled out of the deal in 2018 under former President Donald Trump. President Joe Biden wants to rejoin the deal.

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WORLD

Guerrillas capture Myanmar army base; airstrikes follow



TRANSBORDER NEWS/AP

In this image made from video, smoke rises from a Myanmar army camp near the border of Myanmar and Thailand on Tuesday.

Associated Press
BANGKOK — Ethnic Karen guerrillas said they captured a Myanmar army base Tuesday near the border with Thailand, representing a morale-boosting action for those opposing the military's takeover of the country's civilian government in February. Myanmar's military staged airstrikes several hours later on villages in territory controlled by the

Karen forces, said a guerrilla spokesman, a senior Thai official and a relief worker. A spokesman for the Karen National Union, the minority's main political group seeking greater autonomy from Myanmar's central government, said its armed wing attacked the base at 5 a.m. and burned it down just after dawn. Casualty figures were not yet known, the KNU's head of foreign

affairs, Padoh Saw Taw Nee, said in a text message. There was no immediate comment from Myanmar's military government. The KNU, which controls territory in eastern Myanmar near the Thai border, is a close ally of the resistance movement against the military takeover that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Its armed wing is called the Karen National Liberation Ar-

my. Padoh Man Man of the KNLA's 5th Brigade, which launched the morning's attack, said Myanmar's military carried out airstrikes in the early afternoon, but he did not know how many casualties there were.

Global rights group accuses Israel of apartheid, persecution

Associated Press
JERUSALEM — One of the world's best-known human rights groups said Tuesday that Israel is guilty of the international crimes of apartheid and persecution because of discriminatory policies toward Palestinians within its own borders and in the occupied territories. In a sweeping, 213-page report, the New York-based Human Rights Watch

joins a growing number of commentators and rights groups who view the conflict not primarily as a land dispute but as a single regime in which Palestinians — who make up roughly half the population of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza — are systematically denied basic rights granted to Jews. Israel adamantly rejects that characterization, saying its Arab minority en-

joys full civil rights. It views Gaza, from which it withdrew soldiers and settlers in 2005, as a hostile entity ruled by the Islamic militant group Hamas, and it considers the West Bank to be disputed territory subject to peace negotiations — which collapsed more than a decade ago. Human Rights Watch focused its report on the definitions of apartheid and persecution used by the International

Criminal Court, which launched a probe into possible Israeli war crimes last month. Israel rejects the court as biased. The report cites a range of policies it says are aimed at ensuring a Jewish majority in Israel and lands it intends to keep, while largely confining Palestinians to scattered enclaves under overarching Israeli control, with policies that encourage Palestinians to leave.

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Prioritize Afghan Sikhs, Hindus in US refugee cap

BY HENNA HUNDAL
AND SIMRAN JEET SINGH
Special to *The Washington Post*

President Joe Biden's announcement that U.S. troops will be leaving Afghanistan kicked off much discussion about the costs of the war effort, the deterioration of Afghan-Taliban peace talks, and the future of U.S. foreign policy in the region. But the national debate has largely ignored the alarming human toll: a potential genocide awaiting Afghanistan's religious minorities.

Afghanistan, one of the world's most troubled countries, is home to a diminishing population of Sikhs and Hindus, who trace their roots in the country as far back as the 16th century. At that time, Sikhism's founder, Guru Nanak, journeyed through Afghanistan to share his teachings. By the 1970s, the Afghan Sikh and Hindu population is believed to have swelled to nearly 700,000.

Today, only an estimated 700 Sikhs and Hindus remain in the country. Many have been killed and more have fled following decades of discrimination and targeted violence. While the Afghan government and the Taliban engage in a shaky, protracted peace process, the fate of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus hangs in the balance as much as Afghanistan's future itself.

The physical danger to these religious minorities is palpable. Year after year, suicide bombings have targeted Afghan Sikhs, who are distinguished by their turbans, and have decimated Afghanistan's few remaining Sikh temples. In March 2020, Islamic State killed 25 Afghan Sikhs during a prayer service at a Sikh gurdwara in Kabul. In 2018, ISIS killed 17 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus who were en route to a discussion with President Ashraf Ghani. According to U.S. intelligence, ISIS is still

Biden can prevent an imminent genocide by keeping his campaign promise of refugee protection.

positioned for terrorist attacks within Afghanistan.

There is little hope that the Afghan-Taliban peace talks will yield a good outcome for the few Sikhs and Hindus left in the country. At best, a power-sharing agreement patched together by the Afghan government and the Taliban could bring about a reduction in overall violence. Nevertheless, Afghan Sikhs have reason to worry. In the 1990s, during the period when the Taliban regime controlled the country, they were ordered to brand themselves with physical identification. As the Taliban representatives at the current peace talks drag their feet on upholding women's rights in a power-sharing arrangement, the rights of Afghanistan's religious minorities seem all but in limbo.

The United States has failed to usher in lasting peace after two decades of boots on the ground and more than \$2 trillion spent, but it has an opportunity now to secure a major win for human rights. Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, caught in the crossfire of the U.S. on-the-ground involvement and vulnerable to further threats upon its looming departure, deserve a chance at safety. Biden can prevent an imminent genocide by keeping his campaign promise of refugee protection.

The Biden administration has vacillated on the annual number of refugees that will be permitted entry into the United States. After proposals to lift the refugee cap this

year from 15,000 to 62,500, the Biden administration backtracked and announced a plan to keep this fiscal year's cap at 15,000. This number matches the record-low ceiling set under the Trump administration's refugee policy that Biden sharply criticized for "slamm[ing] the door on thousands of individuals suffering persecution, many of whom face threats of violence or even death in their home countries."

Swift and significant pressure compelled the Biden administration to reverse course and announce that they will set a final, increased refugee cap by May 15. As the administration reviews what is possible, they should consider prioritizing people who are most vulnerable right now — and Afghan Sikhs and Hindus should be near the top of that list.

The persecution faced by these religious minorities is well-documented and ongoing. While some Afghan Sikhs and Hindus have already fled to India via India's 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act, many report continued harassment, exploitation and relegation to poverty on Indian soil. In the context of this year's historic U.S. troop withdrawal, which will bear enormous geopolitical consequences for the region, it only makes sense for the United States to extend a lifeline now.

The numbers of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus remain small enough for this refugee resettlement process to be smooth and practical. Not to mention, the United States has the infrastructure in place to absorb these folks in the dignified manner they deserve. It's urgent that the Biden administration find the political courage to do so.

Henna Hundal is a public policy graduate student at McGill University and a Global Future Council Fellow at the World Economic Forum. Simran Jeet Singh is a visiting professor at Union Seminary and an Equality Fellow with the Open Society Foundations.

US troops leaving Afghanistan is bad news for Taliban

BY WAHAB RAOFI
Special to *Stars and Stripes*

President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw all U.S. forces from Afghanistan triggered backlash from some in the media and members of Biden's own administration. Some analysts say the plan to pull out all troops by Sept. 11 jeopardizes Washington's peace negotiations with the Taliban and increases chances for an upsurge in violence.

But the decision is sound and based on a lesson learned: The conflict in Afghanistan cannot be solved by military means.

For the past 20 years, the Taliban have used the word "invasion" as justification for their religious obligation to carry on jihad against the infidel invaders, much as the mujahedeen did during the 1980s when they were fighting against the Soviet Union. They had plenty of young Afghans from madrassas in Pakistan to recruit.

But now as the "invaders" have one foot out the door, the Taliban find themselves without an enemy and no incentive to offer soldiers for carrying out a holy war. Foreign supporters of the jihad will zip their pockets and see no reason to invest in a commodity that has lost its value.

More importantly, the Taliban have lost the political momentum they carved out for themselves when they signed a peace agree-

ment with the U.S. early in 2020, which seemed to boost the Taliban's image as a force to reckon with.

But the Biden administration does not appear to regard the Taliban as "tough and smart" — words that former President Donald Trump used to describe them.

A big blow came in the Moscow conference last month when the Taliban's prominent "friends" Pakistan, Russia and Iran all voiced opposition to the reestablishment of a Taliban Emirate regime, fearing it could spread Islamic extremism into their own countries.

More bad news for the Taliban is that their soldiers won't be welcome to enter Kabul, as they were in 2006 to restore law and order. Today, they likely would face severe resistance from citizens who would reject the imposition of an Emirate regime.

Taliban leaders are not ambiguous about what they really want. Whenever they are asked to explain what kind of political system, schooling, economy, foreign policy and treatment of women they espouse, their answer is a single word: Islamic. This is why they are afraid of peace.

So what's the best path forward?

Whereas troop withdrawal is the right thing to do, completely abandoning Afghanistan could send the country into anarchy and once again turn it into a potential den for al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. This could be

avoided if the U.S. and other allies offer support for Afghanistan until the country is stabilized and ready to safeguard its newfound freedoms of speech, women's rights and free elections.

Afghanistan isn't ready to stand on its own feet without foreign financial aid. Its government still relies on international funding for the vast majority of its security costs.

The future could be brighter for Afghanistan now that the Taliban are losing their hold on the population. The only friendship they now enjoy is with Pakistan, which still supports the Taliban's control-and-command center on their soil. But Pakistan may soon come to its senses. As the Brookings Institute wrote, "If you grow vipers in your backyard, you're going to get bitten."

A year from now, the Taliban could be talking about "the good old days" when they were fighting a holy war. Now they have one logical choice: join the political process and return to normal life.

Keeping boots on the ground in Afghanistan was a bad recipe. It only prolonged a war that had no military solution. Biden's decision truly could lead to peace if the U.S. and its allies continue their support for Afghanistan.

Wahab Raofi, an Afghan-born American, is a graduate of Kabul Law School. He formerly worked as an interpreter for NATO forces in Afghanistan.

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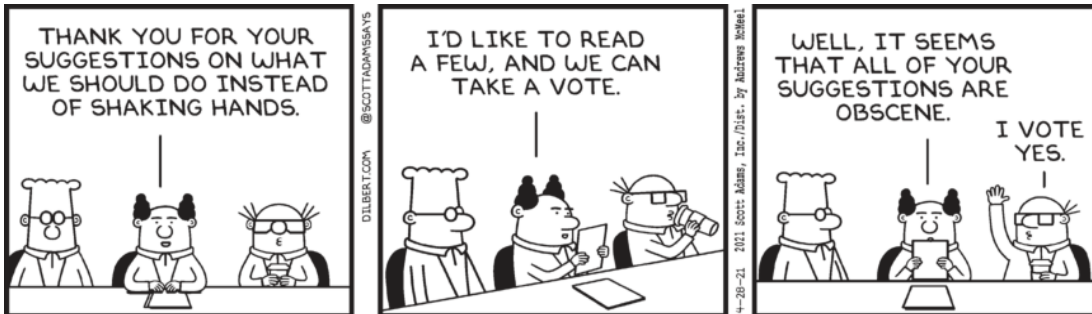


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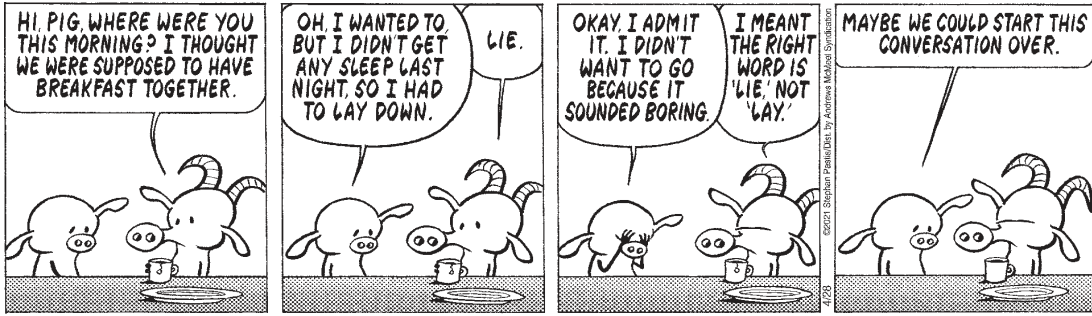
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



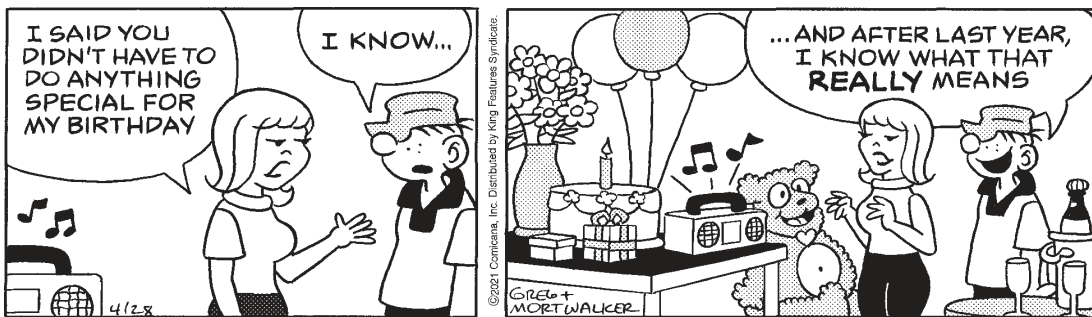
Candorville



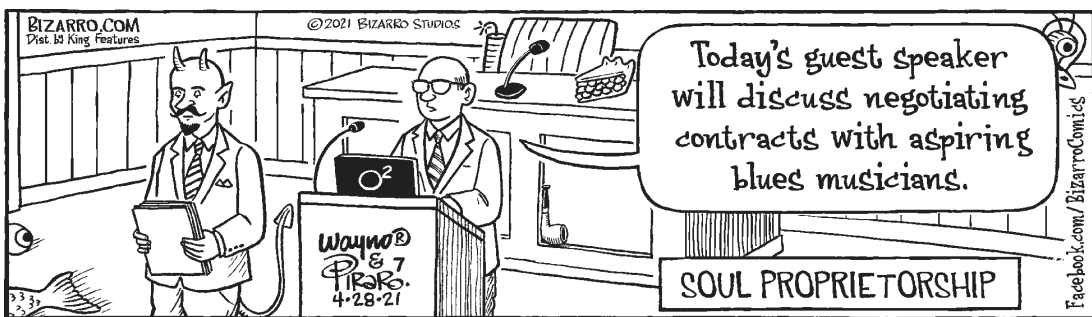
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19				20					
			21		22	23		24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31		32			
33				34				35		36		
37			38		39				40			
41				42		43						
			44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			55		
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

ACROSS

- 1 Bowler, e.g.
- 4 Scratched (out)
- 8 Sidewalk eatery
- 12 Vegetable peeler brand
- 13 Zero, in tennis
- 14 Reunion attendee
- 15 Zodiac feline
- 16 Cocktail lounges with music
- 18 God, in Islam
- 20 — -la-la
- 21 Beer ingredient
- 24 Apathetic
- 28 Seedy watering holes
- 32 Winter blanket
- 33 Numerical prefix
- 34 Justice Samuel
- 36 Scot's refusal
- 37 Words to a backstabber
- 39 Reception amenities
- 41 Belt holders
- 43 Clear the decks?
- 44 Madrid Mrs.
- 46 Football team
- 50 Places to order
- 55 Ball club VIP
- 56 Regarding
- 57 Ovid's 53
- 58 Green shade
- 59 Guitarist Atkins
- 60 911 responders
- 61 Filming site

DOWN

- 1 Spanish greeting
- 2 Skater's leap
- 3 Implement
- 4 "Wicked" role played by Idina Menzel
- 5 Japanese pond carp
- 6 Actress Longoria
- 7 Fender bender
- 8 Plotting groups
- 9 Pie — mode
- 10 Bear hair
- 11 German river
- 17 Sphere
- 19 Soul, to Sartre
- 22 Film composer
- 23 Journeys
- 25 Author Quindlen
- 26 Fly high
- 27 Woolly moms

- 28 Hamilton-Burr event
- 29 Division word
- 30 Corleone patriarch
- 31 Leftovers recipe
- 35 Jackie's Ari
- 38 Outcome
- 40 Cookout, briefly
- 42 — Lanka
- 45 Competent
- 47 Strike callers
- 48 Pulitzer winner
- 49 "Phooey!"
- 50 Pouch
- 51 Show to a seat, slangily
- 52 Fr. holy woman
- 53 Goal
- 54 Slowing, in music (Abbr.)

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

4-28

CRYPTOQUIP

X'W NO PNKO ZD YZSPXQ P
 NXZ DL LKDBS KXVAZKF, NBZ
 X'KK KOPCO FDB ZD WD ZAO
 AOPCF YXLZXQV.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A PAIR OF VIRTUOUS GUYS OFFER OPINIONS, ARE THEY GIVING YOU THEIR TWO SAINTS' WORTH?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals B

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FACES

Hopkins honors
Boseman after
best actor win

Associated Press

Anthony Hopkins honored the late Chadwick Boseman after winning the best actor Oscar, hailing his fellow performer as a man “taken from us far too early.”

Hopkins, 83, took the award for his performance in “The Father,” becoming the oldest actor or actress to win an Oscar, edging out Christopher Plummer’s supporting-actor win at age 82 in the 2010 film “Beginners.”



Hopkins

Hopkins’ win was anticlimactic on a show where he wasn’t present to accept the trophy. Presenter Joaquin Phoenix’s reading of his name was the

last dramatic moment of a most unusual ceremony.

Hours later, Hopkins made a belated acceptance speech in a short video message posted on Instagram, standing in front of the rolling green fields of his native Wales.

“I want to pay tribute to Chadwick Boseman, who was taken from us far too early,” he said. “I really did not expect this, so I feel very privileged and honored.”

It is Hopkins’ first Oscar since he was victorious in 1992 for playing Hannibal Lecter.

Despite his pedigree, Hopkins was a surprise winner for his work on “The Father,” playing the role of a man fighting dementia.

Boseman had been expected to win the award, which, in a very rare move from the academy, was the last to be handed out this year instead of best picture.

Boseman was nominated for “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” his final film before cancer claimed his life last August at age 43.

Judge tosses lawsuit of man
who alleged Jackson molestation

A judge on Monday dismissed the lawsuit of a man who alleged that Michael Jackson sexually abused him as a boy.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Mark A. Young granted the Jackson estate’s request to dismiss the suit brought in 2013 by Wade Robson, 38. The judge said two Jackson entertainment corporations targeted by the lawsuit had no legal duty to protect Robson from Jackson.

The dismissal came after the judge dismissed a similar lawsuit in October by James Safechuck. Both men made their allegations in the HBO documentary “Leaving Neverland.”

Other news

■ The Academy Awards television audience plunged to 9.85 million viewers on ABC, less than half of the Oscars’ previous low and continuing a startling trend of viewer tune out for awards shows. The Nielsen company’s preliminary estimate shows that the audience who watched “Nomadland” win best picture Sunday was 58% below last year’s tally of 23.6 million, which set the previous record for least-watched Oscars.

■ A pair of prototype Nikes worn by Kanye West during his performances of “Hey Mama” and “Stronger” at the Grammy Awards in 2008 has shattered the record for the most ever paid for a pair of sneakers. Sotheby’s announced Monday that West’s so-called “Grammy Worn” Nike Air Yeezy 1 fetched \$1.8 million in a private sale.



PAUL R. GIUNTA, INVISION/AP

Travis Scott performs in Atlanta in 2019. The rapper has been honored for his charitable work and his advocacy as one of five recipients of the inaugural RAD impact awards. Scott plans to give “several” scholarships to HBCU students with the funds.

Travis Scott casts a philanthropic eye toward HBCU students

BY HALELUYA HADERO

Associated Press

Travis Scott, the rapper famous for his string of stylish hip-hop hits, from “SICKO MODE” to “Highest in the Room,” and for the wild mosh pits at his concerts, has been flexing his philanthropic arms.

In October, Scott tweeted that he’d pay a semester’s tuition to five students at historically Black colleges and universities. He chose some recipients via social media, and a month later he launched his charitable Cactus Jack Foundation. The foundation partnered with his hometown of Houston to distribute 50,000 free meals to residents during the Texas freeze in February.

For his efforts, the Grammy-nominated rapper, whose real name is Jacques Webster, was one of five recipients announced last week for the first RAD — Red Carpet Advocacy — impact awards, which honor cultural figures who “inspire purpose” in their work. His fellow recipients were actors Charlize Theron, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Laverne Cox and Margot Robbie.

Luxury Stores at Amazon partnered with RAD, an agency that creates advocacy campaigns for charities, to underwrite donations to five charities picked by the celebrities. (The amounts were not specified.)

Luxury Stores has also created an online shop, the RAD Impact Edit, to benefit the charities. Through Friday this week, RAD says all of Amazon’s sales proceeds from the shop will be donated to the charities.

Scott’s foundation, which will receive contributions from Amazon, plans to give several more scholarships for HBCU students using the funding. Separately, the rapper, who is co-parenting his 3-year-old daughter, Stormi, with her mother, Kylie Jenner, is working on a project in Houston that will operate as a design education center for youth.

The Associated Press spoke recently with Scott about his philanthropy and other work. The interview was edited for clarity and length.

AP: Why did you decide to launch your foundation in the fall? And how are you selecting the students to receive scholarships?

Scott: I felt like sharing inspiration, and sharing knowledge is key. It’s one of the main goals. My grandfather, on my dad’s side, was a dean of the graduate school at Prairie View A&M. My grandmother taught at Prairie View, and my dad and all my uncles went to Prairie View, and I was supposed to go there. But I went to another school (the University of Texas, San Antonio). That desire of education was always drawn into me through my grandparents, my dad and my mom.

I went to college and kind of wish I finished, but I didn’t. For other reasons, whether it was financial, I had a different kind of drive. But I knew if certain things could’ve been taken care of, I probably would have been around. My grandfather passed not too long ago. I want to use any type of power I have to carry on his legacy on education and the knowledge he instilled in me to help the next person who wants to be educated and not held back from education by anything.

But the scholarship is just one aspect of the foundation. When we did the past scholarships, the freshmen couldn’t even go to campus because of the pandemic. They couldn’t even enjoy the campus life, and their parents probably couldn’t go to work. I just wanted to help. The connectivity between that and my grandfather, and helping some of these kids who come from the same community I come from, it’s important. Especially some of these kids that go to HBCUs. My sister goes to Howard University, and my brother goes to Prairie View A&M.

A lot of people will get a lot of stuff done if the hardship wasn’t on them. So anytime you can come through and take that burden off their back, it’s amazing.

How many more scholarships do you plan to give with the new funds the foundation is getting from the luxury store at Amazon and its partnership with the RAD awards?

I want to give out as many as we can every year. As the years come, and the more opportunities we have to be able to give out scholarships, we definitely want to do that. Hopefully, we can double and triple it every year.

We’re also about to start creating a space for people to create products, cook up ideas and hear from different creative people. They could teach a class at the spot and do different things. And maybe even help support people’s projects.

You also partnered with the New Schools Parsons School of Design in New York, and My Brother’s Keeper, Houston — an initiative to reduce opportunity gaps for minority boys and young men in Houston — to bring Parsons’ fashion design programs to the city. Why did you want to bring that program to your hometown?

In Houston, or cities like Houston, we don’t really have collegiate schools like Parsons where people can get those ideas out. You kind of have to go to New York City, London or Paris. But there are people in the state of Texas, the South or the Midwest who are creators but don’t have that outlet. With this program, kids in high school or college can start learning these designs early when they might not have the finances to go all the way to New York City. Thankfully, Parsons partnered with me to create this dream and establish it in Houston to help more creatives coming out from my hometown.

Forbes once called you “corporate America’s brand whisperer” because of your successful endorsement deals with companies like McDonalds. What is the driving force behind it?

I’m looking at these not as endorsements but as partnerships. The main thing with what I do at Cactus Jack with my squad of people is connecting with these brands instead of things being thrown upon us. It’s about bringing change and helping inspire companies to do different things that really connect to who they call a consumer but I call humans — real fans.

You’re headlining Rolling Loud in Miami this July, one of the first major music festivals that’s scheduled to happen after many of them were delayed or canceled amid the COVID-19 pandemic. What do you think it’s going to be like?

I can’t wait. I’m amped and ready to flip a stage and just see mayhem again. Oh, my goodness. There are so many songs I haven’t even performed.

SCOREBOARD/NFL

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

NCAA FCS Playoffs

First Round
Saturday, April 24
 South Dakota St. 31, Holy Cross 3
 S. Illinois 34, Weber St. 31
 Delaware 19, Sacred Heart 10
 Jacksonville St. 49, Davidson 14
 James Madison 31, VMI 24
 North Dakota 44, Missouri St. 10
 North Dakota St. 42, E. Washington 20
 Sam Houston 21, Monmouth 15

Quarterfinals
May 1 and 2
 South Dakota St. vs. S. Illinois
 Delaware vs. Jacksonville St.
 James Madison vs. North Dakota
 North Dakota St. vs. Sam Houston

Semifinals
Saturday, May 8

TBD

Championship
Sunday, May 16
At Toyota Stadium
Frisco, Texas

Semifinal winners

TENNIS

BMW Open

Monday
At MTTC Iphitos
Munich
Purse: Euro 419,470
Surface: Red clay
Men's Singles
Round of 32
 Ilya Ivashka, Belarus, def. Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, 6-1, 6-2.
 John Millman (8), Australia, def. Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 7-6 (3), 3-6, 7-5.
 Guido Pella, Argentina, def. Egor Gerasimov, Belarus, 6-0, 2-0, ret.
 Ricardas Berankis, Lithuania, def. Maximilian Marterer, Germany, 7-6 (10), 6-3.
 Federico Coria, Argentina, def. Cedrik-Marcel Stebe, Germany, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Men's Doubles
Round of 16
 Yannick Hanfmann and Dominik Koepfer, Germany, def. Denys Molchanov, Ukraine, and Franko Skugor, Croatia, 6-7 (4), 7-5, 10-5.
 Philipp Oswald, Austria, and Marcus Daniell (4), New Zealand, def. Nikoloz Basilashvili, Georgia, and Andre Begemann, Germany, 6-2, 7-5.

Estoril Open

Monday
At Clube de Tennis do Estoril
Estoril, Portugal
Purse: Euro 419,470
Surface: Red clay
Men's Singles
Round of 32
 Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (8), Spain, def. Pablo Andujar, Spain, 6-3, 4-6, 6-1.
 Nuno Borges, Portugal, def. Jordan Thompson, Australia, 7-6 (5), 6-3.
 Kevin Anderson, South Africa, def. Frances Tiafoe, United States, 4-6, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (4).
 Jeremy Chardy, France, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Men's Doubles
Round of 16
 Dominic Inglot and Luke Bambridge, Britain, def. Rohan Bopanna, India, and Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, 6-2, 7-6 (1).
 Oliver Marach, Austria, and Austin Krajicek (3), United States, def. Joao Sousa, Portugal, and Cameron Norrie, Britain, 6-7 (4), 6-4, 11-9.

AP SPOTLIGHT

April 28

1966 — Boston edges the Los Angeles Lakers 95-93 in Game 7, giving the Celtics and coach Red Auerbach eight straight NBA titles. Auerbach, who announced his retirement earlier, is replaced by center Bill Russell, the first black head coach of a major U.S. sports team.

1967 — Muhammad Ali refuses induction into the U.S. Armed Forces. He is arrested and the New York State Athletic Commission suspends his boxing license and strips him of his heavyweight title.

1987 — The NBA awards expansion franchises to Charlotte, N.C. and Miami for 1988, and Minneapolis and Orlando, Fla., in 1989.

1990 — Boston set single-game NBA playoff records for scoring and shooting accuracy in a 157-128 rout of the New York Knicks to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round series.

1992 — Video replay is used to decide a playoff game for the first time. In game six of the Detroit-Minnesota division semifinal, Sergei Fedorov of the Red Wings appears to hit the crossbar behind Minnesota goalie Jon Casey during overtime. The North Stars ice the puck immediately, but referee Rob Shick calls for a video review. The replay shows the puck enters the goal just below the crossbar and caroms off the frame at the back of the net. Fedorov is awarded the goal to give the Red Wings a series-tying 1-0 victory.

1995 — Michael Jordan, in his first playoff game since his return from retirement, scores 48 points as the Chicago Bulls beat the Charlotte Hornets 108-100.

1995 — The Orlando Magic give the Boston Celtics their worst defeat in team history, 124-77, in a playoff opener.

2009 — Washington edges the New York Rangers 2-1 in Game 7 of their Eastern Conference series to cap a comeback from a 3-games-to-1 deficit. It is the franchise's first series victory since the 1997-98 season, when Washington made it all the way to the Stanley Cup finals.

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	1	0	1	4	6	4
Atlanta	1	0	1	4	3	1
New England	1	0	1	4	3	2
NYCFC	1	1	0	3	6	2
Inter Miami CF	1	1	0	3	4	4
D.C. United	1	1	0	3	2	2
Nashville	0	0	2	2	4	4
Orlando City	0	0	2	2	1	1
Columbus	0	0	1	1	0	0
Philadelphia	0	1	1	1	1	2
Toronto FC	0	1	1	1	4	6
Chicago	0	1	1	1	3	5
Cincinnati	0	1	1	1	2	7
New York	0	2	0	0	3	5

Western Conference						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LA Galaxy	2	0	0	6	6	4
Seattle	1	0	1	4	5	1
LAFC	1	0	1	4	3	1
Sporting KC	1	0	1	4	3	2
Vancouver	1	0	1	4	3	2
San Jose	1	1	0	3	4	3
Real Salt Lake	1	0	0	3	2	1
Houston	1	1	0	3	3	3
Austin	1	1	0	3	3	3
Portland	1	1	0	3	2	2
FC Dallas	0	1	1	1	1	3
Colorado	0	1	1	1	1	3
Minnesota	0	2	0	0	1	6

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

Saturday's games

Chicago at New York
 Sporting Kansas City at Real Salt Lake
 Columbus at Montreal
 Los Angeles FC at Houston
 Atlanta at New England
 Cincinnati at Orlando City
 New York City FC at Philadelphia
 Austin at Minnesota
 Portland at FC Dallas
 D.C. United at San Jose

Sunday's games

Miami at Nashville
 LA Galaxy at Seattle
 Colorado at Vancouver

Friday, May 7

San Jose at Real Salt Lake

Saturday, May 8

Philadelphia at Chicago
 Toronto FC at New York
 D.C. United at Columbus
 New England at Nashville
 Montreal at Vancouver
 Houston at FC Dallas
 New York City FC at Orlando City
 Los Angeles FC at LA Galaxy
 Minnesota at Colorado

Leaders

Through April 25

Goals	
Javier Hernandez, LA	5
Jhonder Cadiz, NSH	2
Valentin Castellanos, NYC	2
Cecilio Dominguez, ATX	2
Gonzalo Higuain, MCF	2
Anderson Julio, RSL	2
Jesus Medina, NYC	2
Raul Ruidiaz, SEA	2
Luka Stojanovic, CHI	2
Mason Toye, MTL	2
Shots	
Raul Ruidiaz, SEA	11
Robert Beric, CHI	10
Robin Lod, MIN	10
Jhonder Cadiz, NSH	9
Hany Mukhtar, NSH	9
Emanuel Reynoso, MIN	9
Michael Barrios, COL	8
Valentin Castellanos, NYC	8
Gonzalo Higuain, MCF	8
Randall Leal, NSH	8
Shots on Goal	
Randall Leal, NSH	7
Raul Ruidiaz, SEA	7
Javier Hernandez, LA	6
Gonzalo Higuain, MCF	6
Valentin Castellanos, NYC	5
Michael Barrios, COL	4
Jhonder Cadiz, NSH	4
Jesus Medina, NYC	4
Maximiliano Urruti, HOU	4
Saves	
Brad Stuver, ATX	12
Przemyslaw Tyton, CIN	11
Jonathan Bond, LA	10
Brad Guzan, ATL	8
Jimmy Maurer, DAL	8

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Selected the contract of LHP Jay Flaa from alternate training site. Optioned LHP Zac Lowther to alternate training site. Optioned OF Ryan McKenna to alternate training site.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Optioned RHP Jonathan Stiever to alternate training site.

CLEVELAND INDIANS — Placed RHP Nick Wittgren on the paternity list. Recalled LHP Kyle Nelson from alternate training site.

DETROIT TIGERS — Reassigned 1B Renato Nunez outright to alternate training site.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Activated 2B Jose Altuve from the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Peter Solomon from alternate training site. Placed RHP Jake Odorizzi on 10-day IL retroactive to April 25. Optioned 3B Abraham Toro to alternate training site. Transferred RHP Pedro Baez from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Activated 3B Anthony Rendon from the injured list. Optioned 2B Luis Rengifo to alternate training site.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Activated SS Andrelton Simmons from the COVID-19 IL. Optioned INF Nick Gordon to taxi squad.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Recalled RHP Deivi Garcia from alternate training site. Optioned RHP Nick Nelson to alternate training site. Optioned RHP Deivi Garcia to alternate training site.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Activated RHP Mike Fiers from the IL. Optioned LHP Adam Kolarek to alternate training site.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Recalled RHP Robert Dugger from alternate training site. Placed LHP Nick Margevicius on 10-day IL.

TEXAS RANGERS — Selected the contract of LHP Hyeon-Jong Yang from alternate training site. Optioned OF Leody Taveras to alternate training site. Transferred 1B/OF Ronald Guzman from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Optioned RHP Riley Smith to alternate training site.

ATLANTA BRAVES — Optioned C William Contreras to alternate training site.

CHICAGO CUBS — Optioned RHP Jason Adam to alternate training site. Selected the contracts of RHP Trevor McGill and C Tony Wolters from alternate training site. Placed C Austin Romine on the 10-day IL. Transferred RHPs Jonathan Holder and Rowan Wick from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

COLORADO ROCKIES — Announced the resignation of Jeff Bridich as executive vice president/general manager. Named Greg Feasel club president.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Activated INF Gavin Lux and RHP Dennis Santana from the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Mitch White from alternate training site. Placed LHP David Price on the 10-day IL. Optioned LHP Garrett Cleavinger and OF DJ Peters to alternate training site.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Selected the contract of LF Pablo Reyes from alternate training site. Optioned CF Corey Ray to alternate training site.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Activated LHP Matt Moore from the 10-day IL. Optioned LHP Bailey Falter, RHP Spencer Howard and CF Mickey Moniak to alternate training site. Activated LHP Jose Alvarado from the 10-day IL.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS — Signed C Demarcus Cousins to a rest-of-season contract.

Women's National Basketball Association

INDIANA FEVER — Waived G Chanelle Molina.

LAS VEGAS ACES — Waived G Kiona Jeter.

NEW YORK LIBERTY — Signed G/F Rebecca Allen to a contract.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Exercised their fifth-year option on CB Jaire Alexander.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Exercised their fifth-year option on DT Vita Vea.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Announced the retirement of C Andrew Shaw.

OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled Gs Filip Gustavsson and Kevin Mandolese from loan to Belleville (AHL). Reassigned D Cody Goloubef and RW Logan Shaw to Belleville (AHL).

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Reassigned G Gilles Senn to Binghamton (AHL).

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

PORTLAND TIMBERS — Signed F Emanuel Perez to a one-year contract and loaned him to Austin in exchange for third-round pick in the 2023 MLS SuperDraft.

TORONTO FC — Announced the signing of F Yeferson Soteldo as a designated player through 2025, that he will be added to the roster pending receipt of his international transfer certificate, work permit and completion of a successful physical.

COLLEGE

BROWN — Named Ryan Mattison football offensive coordinator, Eric Bunker wide receivers coach and Willie Edwards running backs coach.

MARYLAND — Named Danny Manning assistant men's basketball coach.

TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY — Named Nikita Johnson assistant men's basketball coach.

Questions: Opt-outs complicated evaluations

FROM PAGE 24

All of this should result in a wild weekend of buildup for the 2021 season, when the NFL hopes sell-outs replace opt-outs and normalcy returns in sports and society alike.

"It's a very complicated draft," ESPN analyst Mel Kiper Jr. said. "I always say, 'mysterious/complicated' draft" because teams didn't have uniform 40-yard dash times and other measurements and didn't get to poke and prod the prospects themselves.

"The opt-outs complicate things even more," added Kiper.

"It's a year like no other," agreed Bengals player personnel director Duke Tobin. "There are players in this draft who have really only played one year of college football. You're projecting."

More so than ever. "There are guys in this draft that (come) August it'll be the first time in 20 months they'll have put pads on," Gettleman marveled. "And some of those guys are very, very highly rated."

Hall of Fame executive Bill Polian called this year's draft a throwback to a bygone era before technology changed the scouting world.

"I think it will probably be less homogenous than it's been in the past — which is not a bad thing," Polian said.

NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah said consensus this year was as elusive as Tyreek Hill is in man coverage.

"Look, group think is a real thing," Jeremiah said. "When you get scouts that pal around together, we go to the same schools and you'd be at the same places watching the same players. Everybody ends up talking and you kind of end up getting some consensus on some players."

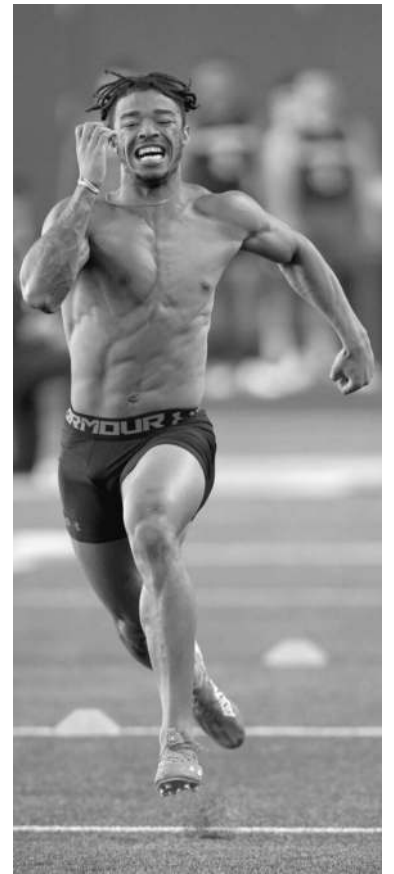
Same thing at the combine. "So there's just been less gathering. I think in some ways it's better because you get individual evaluations," Jeremiah said. "But I can't remember more variance just talking to buddies around the league about specific players where the (evaluations) are so wildly different."

Jeremiah also considers this shakeup a positive development.

"That makes it fun," he said. "I think a lot of teams that I've talked to have really tried to shrink their draft board more so than in years past."

You know what else has dwindled?

The entire pool of candidates. With the NCAA granting an extra year of eligibility because of the pandemic, a crush of players stayed in school. By mid-April, fewer than 700 players had signed a standard representation agree-



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST / AP

Cornerback Greg Newsome II runs the 40 yard-dash during Northwestern's Pro Day for NFL scouts March 9 in Evanston, Ill.

ment with an NFL agent, about one-third the usual number.

That left this thinnest of draft classes with their college pro day performances to replace the one-stop scouting combine — unless they were lucky enough to get invited to the Senior Bowl, where every team got 15 minutes of face time with them.

The result of all these factors is a puzzling draft loaded at the top but blindfolded at the bottom.

"We had so many kids go back to school. That's what's going to impact the bottom half of the draft," Jeremiah said. "That's why everybody that I talk to around the league just says, 'We don't know what the heck we're going to do with the sixth- and seventh-round picks. If I can get rid of them I'm going to get rid of them' just because next year's class, with those sixth- and seventh-round picks, are going to be really valuable."

Teams were allowed up to five one-hour videoconferences with prospects this spring, so that softened the blow of not getting to fly them in or interview them at the combine.

Still, team doctors couldn't get their hands on them.

"You've got incomplete medical information on these guys, and nothing scares a general manager more," said Jeremiah, who added that teams "aren't freaked out about the football side of the evaluation. (They're) majorly freaked out about the medical stuff."

NHL

Sharks beat Coyotes to snap 8-game losing streak

By JOE STIGLICH
Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Alexander Barabanov scored his first NHL goal to help the San Jose Sharks beat the Arizona Coyotes 6-4 on Monday night in the Sharks' first home game with fans in attendance in 13 months.

Rookie goalie Josef Korenar made 21 saves and earned his first NHL victory as San Jose snapped an eight-game losing streak, its longest since 2005.

The Sharks rewarded the small crowd that was allowed into SAP Center for the first time this season, as COVID-19 restrictions in California forced San Jose to play in front of empty seats at home until Monday.

"I think they were just as excited as we were," Sharks defenseman Erik Karlsson said. "It hasn't been an easy season for us, so it's nice to see that as many showed up as possibly could. They were happy to be here."

Karlsson, Logan Couture, Brent Burns and Noah Gregor all scored as San Jose jumped out to a 4-0 lead early in the second period. But it needed Barabanov's goal at 11:17 of the third to help fend off a Coyotes comeback.

"He plays a real smart game," Sharks coach Bob Boughner said of Barabanov. "He's obviously got high-end skill, you can see that. You can tell he's dangerous in the offensive zone. He looks like a confident player."

Arizona fought back from a 4-0 deficit on goals from Michael Bunting, Clayton Keller and Jakob Chychrun to pull within one. After Barabanov's goal made it 5-3, Chychrun scored his second goal of the night with 4:44 left in the third to make it 5-4.

Evander Kane added an empty-netter for San Jose with 8 seconds remaining. He also had three assists.



JOSIE LEPE/AP

San Jose Sharks goaltender Josef Korenar had 21 saves in his first NHL win Monday. The Sharks beat the Arizona Coyotes 6-4 in San Jose, Calif.



FRED GREENSLADE/AP

The Edmonton Oilers' Connor McDavid, center, celebrates his goal against the Winnipeg Jets with Jesse Puljujarvi, right, and other teammates during the Oilers' 6-1 win Monday in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

ROUNDUP

McDavid hat trick leads Oilers past Jets, into 2nd

Edmonton's 6-1 win allows team to pass Winnipeg for second in North Division

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Connor McDavid recorded his third hat trick of the season and the ninth of his career, leading Edmonton to a 6-1 win over Winnipeg on Monday night that lifted the Oilers past the Jets and into second place in the North Division.

Leon Draisaitl had a goal and an assist and Alex Chiasson and Darrell Nurse also scored for Edmonton, which has two games in hand on the Jets. Mike Smith made 36 saves.

McDavid, who leads the NHL in scoring with 81 points, also had an assist.

The Oilers improved to 6-2-0 against Winnipeg and have won five straight versus the Jets, allowing just six goals over that span.

Mark Scheifele scored for Winnipeg (27-18-3). The Jets dropped a fourth straight game in regulation.

Blues 4, Avalanche 1: David Perron had a goal and two assists as host St. Louis beat Colorado.

Vladimir Tarasenko, Brayden Schenn, and Robert Thomas also scored, and Jordan Binnington made 30 saves as the Blues won their second straight game against the Avalanche. Colorado won the season series 5-3.

Nathan MacKinnon scored for the Avs, and Jonas Johansson had 16 saves. Colorado remains four points behind West Division-lead-

ing Vegas. The Avalanche have played one fewer game.

Canadiens 2, Flames 1: Tyler Toffoli's goal in the second period was the winner as Montreal won at Calgary.

Toffoli scored his fourth goal in as many games and his team-leading 25th of the season. Shea Weber also scored for the Canadiens. Jake Allen made 21 saves for the win.

Montreal opened a six-point gap on the Flames, who are chasing the Canadiens for the fourth and final playoff berth in the North Division.

Elias Lindholm scored for Calgary. Jacob Markstrom had 22 saves in the loss.

Senators 2, Canucks 1: Drake Batherson scored a tiebreaking goal midway through the second period and host Ottawa defeated Vancouver.

Josh Norris also scored for the Senators, and Brady Tkachuk had two assists.

Olli Juolevi scored for the Canucks, temporarily drawing Vancouver even with a long blast 14:07 into the first period.

Ottawa's Marc Hogberg stopped 25 of 26 shots for his third win of the season.

Stars 4, Hurricanes 3 (OT): Jamie Benn scored the overtime winner for the second straight game and assisted on Dallas' three regulation goals in a win over visiting Carolina.

Benn scored on a pass from Jason Robertson at 2:44 of overtime. He scored 32 seconds into overtime Saturday to beat Detroit 2-1.

Joe Pavelski, Jason Dickinson and Denis Gurianov also scored for the Stars. Jake Oettinger made 29 saves.

Max McCormick, Jaccob Slavin and Jani Hakanpaa scored for the Hurricanes, who clinched a playoff berth with the point.

Predators 4, Panthers 1: Juuse Saros made 39 saves, and host Nashville beat Florida to hold onto the fourth and final playoff spot in the Central Division.

Saros improved to 13-4-1 in his last 18 starts and helped the Predators stay two points ahead of Dallas by beating the Panthers for the first time this season in Nashville.

Nick Cousins scored the go-ahead goal in the second period. Yakov Trenin and Erik Haula each scored a goal in the third, and Mikael Granlund had a power-play goal for the Predators, who won their second straight.

Kings 4, Ducks 1: Sean Walker and Mikey Anderson scored, Jonathan Quick made 21 saves and host Los Angeles defeated Anaheim.

Dustin Brown and Trevor Moore added empty-net goals for the Kings, who are six points behind St. Louis in the race for the final playoff spot in the West Division.

Scoreboard

East Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	49	32	14	3	67	169	135
Washington	48	31	13	4	66	170	144
N.Y. Islanders	48	29	14	5	63	136	113
Boston	47	27	14	6	60	136	118
N.Y. Rangers	49	25	18	6	56	164	131
Philadelphia	48	22	19	7	51	136	171
New Jersey	48	14	27	7	35	121	170
Buffalo	49	13	29	7	33	121	171

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Carolina	48	31	10	7	69	156	118
Florida	50	31	14	5	67	159	137
Tampa Bay	48	32	14	2	66	160	125
Nashville	50	27	21	2	56	137	139
Dallas	48	21	15	12	54	139	124
Chicago	48	22	21	5	49	135	151
Detroit	50	17	25	8	42	115	158
Columbus	50	15	25	10	40	121	170

West Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vegas	47	34	11	2	70	160	103
x-Colorado	46	31	11	4	66	162	112
x-Minnesota	47	31	13	3	65	151	123
St. Louis	46	21	19	6	48	135	143
Arizona	49	21	23	5	47	132	156
San Jose	48	19	24	5	43	131	167
Los Angeles	46	18	22	6	42	124	137
Anaheim	49	14	28	7	35	106	160

North Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	48	30	13	5	65	159	130
Edmonton	46	28	16	2	58	150	126
Winnipeg	48	27	18	3	57	149	135
Montreal	47	21	17	9	51	136	136
Calgary	48	21	24	3	45	128	139
Vancouver	42	19	20	3	41	114	132
Ottawa	49	18	27	4	40	133	171

x-clinched playoff spot
Sunday's games
 Pittsburgh 1, Boston 0
 N.Y. Rangers 6, Buffalo 3
 Philadelphia 4, New Jersey 3, OT
 Tampa Bay 4, Columbus 3, OT

Monday's games
 Montreal 2, Calgary 1
 Ottawa 2, Vancouver 1
 St. Louis 4, Colorado 1
 Dallas 4, Carolina 3, OT
 Nashville 4, Florida 1
 Edmonton 6, Winnipeg 1
 Los Angeles 4, Anaheim 1
 San Jose 6, Arizona 4

Tuesday's games
 Boston at Pittsburgh
 Buffalo at N.Y. Rangers
 Detroit at Columbus
 N.Y. Islanders at Washington
 Philadelphia at New Jersey
 Florida at Nashville
 Tampa Bay at Chicago
 Carolina at Dallas

Wednesday's games
 Vancouver at Ottawa
 St. Louis at Minnesota
 Toronto at Montreal
 Edmonton at Winnipeg
 Colorado at Vegas
 Anaheim at Los Angeles
 Arizona at San Jose

Thursday's games
 Buffalo at Boston
 Dallas at Tampa Bay
 Detroit at Carolina
 N.Y. Islanders at N.Y. Rangers
 Philadelphia at New Jersey
 Pittsburgh at Washington
 Vancouver at Toronto
 Florida at Chicago
 St. Louis at Minnesota
 Calgary at Edmonton

Friday's games
 Winnipeg at Montreal
 San Jose at Colorado
 Vegas at Arizona
 Los Angeles at Anaheim

Scoring leaders				
Through Monday				
	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	45	25	52	77
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	45	22	42	64
Mitchell Marner, TOR	48	17	42	59
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	41	18	41	59
Patrick Kane, CHI	48	15	43	58
Auston Matthews, TOR	44	34	24	58
Brad Marchand, BOS	45	25	32	57
Artemi Panarin, NYR	38	17	39	56
Sidney Crosby, PIT	48	20	36	56
Mark Scheifele, WPG	47	18	36	54
Mark Stone, LV	46	18	35	53
Jonathan Huberdeau, FLA	49	16	36	52
Jake Guentzel, PIT	49	21	31	52

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	41	20	.672	—
Philadelphia	40	21	.656	1
New York	34	28	.548	7½
Boston	32	29	.525	9
Toronto	26	35	.426	15
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	34	28	.548	—
Miami	32	30	.516	2
Charlotte	30	30	.500	3
Washington	27	34	.443	6½
Orlando	18	43	.295	15½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	37	23	.617	—
Indiana	29	31	.483	8
Chicago	26	35	.426	11½
Cleveland	21	40	.344	16½
Detroit	19	43	.306	19
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	33	27	.550	—
Memphis	31	29	.517	2
San Antonio	31	29	.517	2
New Orleans	27	34	.443	6½
Houston	15	46	.246	18½
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Utah	44	17	.721	—
Denver	40	21	.656	4
Portland	32	28	.533	11½
Oklahoma City	20	41	.328	24
Minnesota	18	44	.290	26½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	43	18	.705	—
L.A. Clippers	43	20	.683	1
L.A. Lakers	36	25	.590	7
Golden State	31	30	.508	12
Sacramento	25	36	.410	18

Sunday's games	
Charlotte 125, Boston 104	Brooklyn 128, Phoenix 119
Memphis 120, Portland 113	Washington 119, Cleveland 110
Atlanta 111, Milwaukee 104	Indiana 131, Orlando 112
Golden State 117, Sacramento 113	
Monday's games	
Detroit 100, Atlanta 86	Philadelphia 121, Oklahoma City 90
L.A. Lakers 114, Orlando 103	Toronto 112, Cleveland 96
San Antonio 146, Washington 143, OT	Phoenix 118, New York 110
New Orleans 120, L.A. Clippers 103	Chicago 110, Miami 102
Minnesota 105, Utah 104	Denver 120, Memphis 96
Sacramento 113, Dallas 106	
Tuesday's games	
Milwaukee at Charlotte	Oklahoma City at Boston
Portland at Indiana	Brooklyn at Toronto
Minnesota at Houston	Dallas at Golden State
Wednesday's games	
Atlanta at Philadelphia	Orlando at Cleveland
Charlotte at Boston	Chicago at New York
L.A. Lakers at Washington	San Antonio at Miami
New Orleans at Denver	Portland at Memphis
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix	Utah at Sacramento
Thursday's games	
Brooklyn at Indiana	Dallas at Detroit
Golden State at Minnesota	Milwaukee at Houston
New Orleans at Oklahoma City	Toronto at Denver

Scoring leaders					
Through Monday					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Beal, WAS	52	579	360	1632	31.4
Curry, GS	53	543	298	1657	31.3
Antetokounmpo, MIL	51	525	347	1452	28.5
Doncic, DAL	55	552	292	1561	28.4
Lillard, POR	55	485	373	1564	28.4
LaVine, CHI	53	521	234	1458	27.5
Irving, BKN	45	464	179	1228	27.3
Williamson, NO	56	580	337	1507	26.9

Suns end Knicks' streak at nine

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Playing for the second straight day to finish a cross-country trip featuring the toughest tests in the East, Devin Booker told his coach he was ready to play the whole fourth quarter.

“We wanted this one. We wanted this one bad, just for ourselves,” Booker said. “I mean obviously we knew about the streak that they had going on and we knew that this was going to be a dog-fight.”

Booker and Chris Paul made sure the Phoenix Suns won it.

Booker scored 33 points and the Suns capped their trip with a 118-110 victory Monday night that snapped the New York Knicks' nine-game winning streak.

Paul scored the final seven Phoenix points as the Suns held on to finish 3-2 on their trip that included visits to the top four teams in the Eastern Conference.

Beaten a day earlier by Brooklyn, they fell down by 15 quickly inside Madison Square Garden but refused to stay down.

“Everybody was messing with the young guys before the game like, this ain't just a regular game,” Paul said. “With the way that team's playing over there, this was a fun game.”

Mikal Bridges added 21 points, Paul had 20 and Cameron Johnson hit three three-pointers in the final period after the game was tied at 87 through three.

But even after going ahead by nine with 2:53 to



ELSA, POOL/AP

The Knicks' Julius Randle, center, looks to pass as the Phoenix Suns' Cameron Payne, left, and Cameron Johnson defend during the first half of Monday's game in New York.

play, Phoenix couldn't finish it off until Paul hit a couple of jumpers — the second to barely beat the shot clock — and then a three-pointer with 14.5 seconds remaining to close out the win.

Derrick Rose had 22 points, six rebounds and six assists for the Knicks, who were on their longest winning streak since a 13-game run late in the 2012-13 season.

ROUNDUP

Lakers rally in fourth to beat Magic

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Dennis Schroder scored 13 of 21 points in the fourth quarter, Anthony Davis added 18 points and eight rebounds and the Los Angeles Lakers rallied to beat the Orlando Magic 114-103 on Monday night.

Trailing 80-79 following a sluggish third quarter, the Lakers' offense came alive late to end their losing streak at three games. LA outscored Orlando 35-23 in the fourth period, improving to 19-12 on the road and 9-20 when trailing after three quarters.

Schroder also had 10 assists as he takes on a bigger role for LA in the absence of injured LeBron James.

“He's really growing with his floor-general mentality and running the team,” coach Frank Vogel said of Schroder, who made 6 of 7 shots in the fourth quarter and scored or assisted on 16 of LA's final 18 points. “That's why we feel like (Schroder's emergence) is going to be a silver lining. It was accelerated. Having 'Bron out, there's a lot of silver linings and this is one of them, seeing him grow.”

Montrezl Harrell scored 18 points off the bench for the Lakers, who shot 54% from the floor and hit 11 three-pointers. Andre Drummond chipped in 13 points

and 11 rebounds for Los Angeles.

Chuma Okeke scored 18 points and converted a thunderous dunk over Drummond in the first quarter. Gary Harris scored 17 for the Magic, who have lost six straight and 25 of 30. With Detroit's victory over Atlanta, Orlando has the East's worst record.

Spurs 146, Wizards 143 (OT): DeMar DeRozan had 37 points and 10 assists, and visiting San Antonio ended Washington's season-best eight-game winning streak.

DeRozan scored nine of his points in the fourth quarter and overtime. Neither team led by more than three points after DeRozan's jumper pulled the Spurs within 118-115 with 5:13 left in the fourth.

Timberwolves 105, Jazz 104: D'Angelo Russell had a season-high seven three-pointers and scored 27 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 points and 11 rebounds as host Minnesota rallied to beat Utah.

Mike Conley gave the Jazz a 104-103 lead with 6.4 seconds left, but Ricky Rubio found Russell for a layup on the ensuing possession. Conley then lost the ball in a scramble as time expired.

Pelicans 120, Clippers 103: Zion Williamson scored 23 points on an array of power moves, spinning dribbles and even a three-

pointer, and host New Orleans beat Los Angeles.

Lonzo Ball had 18 points, nine rebounds, seven assists and two steals for New Orleans, which entered the night 4 ½ games out of the final Western Conference play-in spot.

Bulls 110, Heat 102: Nikola Vucevic scored 24 points, Daniel Theis added 23 and visiting Chicago moved closer to the last play-in spot in the Eastern Conference by beating Miami.

Coby White added 17 points for the Bulls, who finished the game on a 36-20 run and outrebounded the Heat 51-34. Theis had 12 rebounds and Vucevic 11 for Chicago.

Nuggets 120, Grizzlies 96: Michael Porter Jr. erupted for 31 points, courtesy of a torrid shooting night, Paul Millsap added nine of his 12 points in the fourth quarter and short-handed Denver beat visiting Memphis.

Nikola Jokic finished with 24 points and 15 rebounds for his league-leading 53rd double-double to help the Nuggets knock off the Grizzlies for a sixth straight time at home.

76ers 121, Thunder 90: Joel Embiid scored 21 points, Ben Simmons had 12 in his return to the lineup and host Philadelphia sent Oklahoma City to its franchise re-

cord-tying 14th straight loss.

The Thunder lost 14 straight games in their first season in Oklahoma City in 2008-09 and can set the team mark for consecutive defeats Tuesday at Boston.

Pistons 100, Hawks 86: Jerami Grant and Frank Jackson scored 18 points apiece to lift host Detroit over Atlanta.

The Hawks shot just 39% from the field and 4-for-27 from three-point range. It was their lowest-scoring game of the season.

Raptors 112, Cavaliers 96: At Tampa, Fla., Pascal Siakam scored 25 points, rookie Malachi Flynn added 18 and Toronto pulled away in the second half to beat depleted Cleveland.

Kyle Lowry contributed nine points, five rebounds and 10 assists for the Raptors, who have won five of six.

Kings 113, Mavericks 106: Tyrese Haliburton had 14 points and 10 assists in his second straight start in place of leading scorer De'Aaron Fox, and host Sacramento beat Dallas.

Richaun Holmes added 24 points for the Kings in his second game back after sitting out five with a strained hamstring. Harrison Barnes had 19 points, and Buddy Hield scored 16, including a clutch three-pointer late in the fourth quarter.

SPORTS BRIEFS/HORSE RACING

BRIEFLY

NHL reaches 7-year TV deal with Turner Sports

The National Hockey League is coming to TNT.

The league and Turner Sports on Tuesday announced a seven-year agreement that begins next season.

The deal means NBC's run of covering the league ends after this season's playoffs. NBC has broadcast games since 2005 and is in the final season of a 10-year contract.

When the Stanley Cup Final is shown on Turner in 2023, it will mark the first time since 1994 they will be only on cable.

The TNT arrangement includes three Stanley Cup Finals, up to 72 regular-season games, half of the first- and second-round playoff games on TNT and TBS as well as a conference final series.

Former UNC coach appeals guilty plea

After killing an 89-year-old pedestrian last year, former University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill women's basketball coach Sylvia Hatchell, 69, has appealed her guilty plea and received a more lenient sentence that will allow her to still drive.

Hatchell's attorney told Superior Court Judge Orlando Hudson on Monday that his client couldn't afford to lose her driver's license for a year if the conviction were allowed to stand, WRAL-TV reported.

The former coach hit Betty Colby with her car in January 2020, causing Colby to hit her head on the pavement of a parking lot. She died two days later.

WVU's Culver will enter NBA Draft early

All-Big 12 forward Derek Culver has decided to skip his senior season at West Virginia to enter the NBA Draft.

Culver announced Monday night on Instagram that he has signed with an agent.

Sources: Dolphins deal Flowers to Washington

The Miami Dolphins agreed to trade guard Ereck Flowers to Washington in a deal that also included a swap of late-round draft picks, two people with knowledge of the agreement confirmed to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The people confirmed the agreement to the AP on condition of anonymity because the teams had not announced it.

In other NFL news:

■ Geno Hayes, a former NFL linebacker who starred at Florida State, has died. He was 33.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Tuesday confirmed his death. He had liver disease and had been in hospice care.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Jockey Luis Saez rides Essential Quality to win the Breeders' Cup Juvenile horse race at Keeneland Race Course in Lexington, Ky., on Nov. 6. Essential Quality is the favorite in the Kentucky Derby.

Trainer seeks Derby history as Louisville's first winner

BY GARY B. GRAVES
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Brad Cox smiles when talking about Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby, making it clear how important both are to the trainer.

After all, he grew up a few blocks away from the historic track. Cox began working with horses at Churchill Downs as a teenager before learning under several trainers and eventually branching out on his own 16 years ago. Along with that education came a natural appreciation for winning there, especially in the track's two marquee races for colts and fillies.

"I mean, it's home," said Cox, 41. "Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby days, you know are the biggest things we have in racing in the state of Kentucky and it means a lot when you can win a race."

"Doesn't matter if it's a maiden race or a claiming race or whatever. Those two days, you always try to have as many as you can and do as well as you can."

While the reigning Eclipse Award winner has earned his share of notable stakes wins, Saturday's 147th Derby presents an opportunity for the home-grown Cox to make a career statement.

He will saddle expected favorite Essential Quality, last year's Juvenile champion who is 5-0, and stablemate Mandaloun in the 20-horse field. Caddo River would have given him three chances but was withdrawn on Sunday. Essential Quality drew the No. 14 post and was the favorite on Tuesday at 2-1 odds.

Cox would become the first Louisville-born trainer to win the Derby, a milestone that would add to the city's rich racing roots and the state's reputation for producing thoroughbreds.

Of course, it takes a special combination of bloodlines, talent, skill and luck just to get a horse to the Derby gate. Then comes the challenge of conquering that coveted 1 1/4 mile against 19 other thoroughbreds with similarly elite pedigrees.

Cox is aware of those obstacles and the spotlight he's under with the horse to beat.

"I'm willing to step up, and I know that it comes with more attention, I guess you would say," said Cox, who has saddled 1,557 winners and won \$86,471,263 lifetime. "I wouldn't use the word pressure. I just have to make some time for extra inter-



MARTA LAVANDIER/AP

Jockey Joel Rosario, right, poses with trainer Brad Cox after riding Knicks Go to the win in the Pegasus World Cup Invitational horse race at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale Beach, Fla. Cox is looking to make history at Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby as the first local winner.

views and stuff like that."

And Cox needs no directions to the winner's circle at Churchill Downs, or elsewhere for that matter, coming off a career season ending with honors as racing's top trainer.

He earned his second Kentucky Oaks win in last September's delayed race with Shedaresthedevil. Veteran Monomoy Girl, the 2018 Oaks champ, won her second Breeders' Cup Distaff in three years over at Keeneland in Lexington en route to a second Eclipse award and likely future spot in the Hall of Fame.

Cox added Breeders' Cup triumphs in the Dirt Mile (Knicks Go) and Juvenile Fillies Turf (Aunt Pearl) before Essential Quality capped his stellar day by winning the Juvenile. He has another strong Kentucky Oaks contender in Travel Column on Friday but is laser focused on grooming his star grey colt to run the race of his life on Saturday.

Derby-winning trainer Todd Pletcher, who brings a quartet of challengers to Essential Quality, said he wouldn't be shocked if Cox broke through.

"Brad has done a terrific job of building a really, really strong stable," Pletcher said, "and he's doing all the right things with it."

Essential Quality is 2-1 favorite for the Derby

BY GARY GRAVES
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Essential Quality is the 2-1 morning line favorite and will start from the No. 14 post for Saturday's 147th Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs.

The \$3 million, 1 1/4-mile marquee race for 3-year-old colts is back on the first Saturday of May after being delayed by Labor Day weekend last fall because of the coronavirus pandemic. The race is expected to be viewed in-person by 45,000 spectators.

Rock Your World is the 5-1 second choice from the No. 15 slot with Known Agenda the 6-1 third choice despite drawing the rail in the 20-horse field. Hot Rod Charlie drew 8-1 odds as the fourth choice from the No. 9 slot.

The obvious focus is on Essential Quality, the reigning 2-year-old champion who enters the Run for the Roses 5-0. His haul of graded stakes victories includes a gutsy Blue Grass victory at Keeneland on April 3 that vaulted the gray son of Tapit to the top of the Derby standings with 140 points and cemented him as the projected favorite.

He's one of two entries trained by Brad Cox. The Eclipse Award-winner will also saddle Mandaloun from the No. 7 as a 15-1 choice in his Derby debut.

Unbeaten Rock Your World, trained by John Sadler, comes in 3-0 following a 4 1/4-length victory in the Santa Anita Derby.

Known Agenda leads Todd Pletcher's four-horse contingent that includes Bourbonic, who drew the outside No. 20 post; Dynamic One (No. 11, 20-1 odds) and Sainthood (No. 5, 50-1). The chestnut colt has won two of three starts this season and has three wins, a second and a third in six career starts.

Scoreboard

Derby post positions		
Pos.	Horse	Odds
1.	HorseKnown Agenda	6-1
2.	Like The King	50-1
3.	Brooklyn Strong	50-1
4.	Keepmeinmind	50-1
5.	Sainthood	50-1
6.	O Besos	20-1
7.	Mandaloun	15-1
8.	Medina Spirit	15-1
9.	Hot Rod Charlie	8-1
10.	Midnight Bourbon	20-1
11.	Dynamic One	20-1
12.	Helium	50-1
13.	Hidden Stash	50-1
14.	Essential Quality	2-1
15.	Rock Your World	5-1
16.	King Fury	20-1
17.	Highly Motivated	10-1
18.	Super Stock	30-1
19.	Soup And Sandwich	30-1
20.	Bourbonic	30-1

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	14	9	.609	—
Tampa Bay	11	12	.478	3
Toronto	10	11	.476	3
Baltimore	10	12	.455	3½
New York	9	13	.409	4½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Kansas City	14	7	.667	—
Chicago	12	9	.571	2
Cleveland	10	11	.476	4
Minnesota	7	14	.333	7
Detroit	7	16	.304	8
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oakland	15	8	.652	—
Seattle	13	10	.565	2
Los Angeles	11	10	.524	3
Houston	11	11	.500	3½
Texas	9	14	.391	6
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	9	8	.529	—
Philadelphia	11	11	.500	½
Atlanta	10	12	.455	1½
Miami	10	12	.455	1½
Washington	8	11	.421	2
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	13	9	.591	—
Pittsburgh	11	11	.500	2
St. Louis	11	11	.500	2
Chicago	10	12	.455	3
Cincinnati	10	12	.455	3
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	15	8	.652	—
San Francisco	15	8	.652	—
San Diego	13	11	.542	2½
Arizona	11	11	.500	3½
Colorado	8	14	.364	6½
Monday's games				
Kansas City 3, Detroit 2				
Cleveland 5, Minnesota 3, 10 innings				
Baltimore 4, N.Y. Yankees 2				
Oakland 2, Tampa Bay 1				
L.A. Angels 9, Texas 4				
Houston 5, Seattle 2				
Philadelphia 2, St. Louis 1				
Atlanta 8, Chicago Cubs 7				
Miami 8, Milwaukee 0				
San Francisco 12, Colorado 0				
Cincinnati 5, L.A. Dodgers 3, 10 innings				
Tuesday's games				
Minnesota at Cleveland				
Kansas City at Pittsburgh				
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore				
Washington at Toronto				
Boston at N.Y. Mets				
Oakland at Tampa Bay				
L.A. Angels at Texas				
Detroit at Chicago White Sox				
Seattle at Houston				
Chicago Cubs at Atlanta				
Miami at Milwaukee				
Philadelphia at St. Louis				
San Diego at Arizona				
Colorado at San Francisco				
Cincinnati at L.A. Dodgers				
Wednesday's games				
Minnesota (Happ 1-0) at Cleveland (Allen 1-3)				
Kansas City (Minor 2-1) at Pittsburgh (Keller 1-2)				
Boston (Pivetta 2-0) at N.Y. Mets (deGrom 2-1)				
N.Y. Yankees (Germán 1-2) at Baltimore (TBD)				
Washington (Fedde 1-2) at Toronto (Matz 4-0)				
Oakland (Irvin 2-2) at Tampa Bay (Glasnow 2-1)				
L.A. Angels (Cobb 1-1) at Texas (Dunning 1-0)				
Detroit (Mize 1-2) at Chicago White Sox (Rodón 3-0)				
Seattle (Dunn 1-0) at Houston (Greinke 2-1)				
Miami (Alcantara 0-2) at Milwaukee (TBD)				
Cincinnati (Gray 0-1) at L.A. Dodgers (Kershaw 3-2)				
Chicago Cubs (Hendricks 1-2) at Atlanta (TBD)				
Philadelphia (Velasquez 0-0) at St. Louis (Oviedo 0-0)				
San Diego (Weathers 1-0) at Arizona (Widener 1-0)				
Colorado (Márquez 1-1) at San Francisco (Wood 2-0)				
Thursday's games				
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore				
Oakland at Tampa Bay				
Seattle at Houston				
Boston at Texas				
Detroit at Chicago White Sox				
Philadelphia at St. Louis				
Chicago Cubs at Atlanta				
L.A. Dodgers at Milwaukee				
Colorado at Arizona				

Sho time: Ohtani carries Angels

He strikes out 9 in his first pitching win since 2018, drives in two runs

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — That was quite a two-way Sho in a big league start like none since Babe Ruth a century ago.

Shohei Ohtani struck out nine after a shaky first inning on the mound, and also scored three runs and drove in two as the Los Angeles Angels beat the Texas Rangers 9-4 on Monday night.

“A pretty complete game of baseball,” Angels manager Joe Maddon said. “If you weren’t entertained by watching him tonight, you can’t be entertained watching the game of baseball.”

A day after hitting his seventh homer to tie for the MLB lead, Ohtani (1-0) became the first home run leader to be the starting pitcher for a game since Ruth for the New York Yankees against Detroit on June 13, 1921. It was the second time this season Ohtani pitched and batted second.

After giving up four runs while throwing 28 pitches in the first inning — when he walked two, hit another batter and threw a wild pitch — Ohtani got the Angels even at 4-4 in the top of the second when he had a two-run double and then scored on a single by Mike Trout, who had four hits in his return to the lineup.



PHOTOS BY RICHARD W. RODRIGUEZ /AP

Above: Shohei Ohtani struggled in the first inning, but still managed to be the first home run leader to be the starting pitcher since Babe Ruth did so for the Yankees in 1921. Below: Ohtani also scored three times and drove in two runs to lead the Los Angeles Angels to a 9-4 win Monday at Texas.

“I was able to drive in those two runs, that was huge for me, and we were able to tie the game up in the second inning,” Ohtani said through his translator. “So it felt like a fresh start, I treated it like a brand new ballgame.”

The Japanese right-hander retired 14 of the last 15 batters he faced in five innings, with all of his strikeouts in that span. It was his first big league win since 2018, before Tommy John sur-

gery that kept him off the mound for all of 2019 and most of last season.

“I’m very happy for the team victory,” Ohtani said. “Personally that first inning was terrible, so I can’t be overly satisfied.”

Ohtani drew a one-out walk and scored on Jared Walsh’s single in the Angels first. He bunted against the shift for a single in the sixth and scored on Walsh’s double, and was done.



ROUNDUP

Indians top Twins on Luplow HR in 10th

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jordan Luplow hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning off Alex Colomé, giving the Cleveland Indians a 5-3 victory over the Minnesota Twins in their series opener Monday night.

Luplow’s second career game-ending homer was a leadoff shot that easily cleared the wall in left field, scoring free runner César Hernández from second base. Minnesota fell to 0-5 in extra-inning games.

Emmanuel Clase (2-1) worked a perfect inning, helping Cleveland to its second straight win. Luplow was the only batter faced by Colomé (1-3).

It was the first of 19 meetings this season between teams that have combined to win the last five AL Central titles. The Twins are the two-time defending champions.

Luis Arraez gave Minnesota a 3-2 lead in the eighth when he singled home Jake Cave with two outs, but José Ramírez answered in the bottom half with a homer off Tyler Duffey.

Astros 5, Mariners 2: Jose Altuve had three hits and two RBIs in his return to the lineup after testing positive for COVID-19, leading Houston over visiting Seattle.

Yordan Alvarez and Yuli Gurriel both had

three hits and drove in a run as the Astros won for the fourth time in five games.

Braves 8, Cubs 7: Freddie Freeman hit a three-run homer and host Atlanta woke up offensively after a grim doubleheader.

The Braves were coming off two shutout losses to Arizona the previous afternoon — managing just a single hit, by Freeman, over 14 innings. Madison Bumgarner held Atlanta without a hit in his seven-inning victory, though it did not qualify as an official no-hitter.

Phillies 2, Cardinals 1: Zack Wheeler took a one-hit shutout into the ninth inning and Rhys Hoskins homered twice as Philadelphia won at St. Louis.

Hoskins’ seventh career multi-homer game and second this season helped the Phillies improve to 3-1 against the Cardinals.

Reds 5, Dodgers 3 (10): Jesse Winker’s two-run homer in the 10th inning sent Cincinnati to a win at Los Angeles to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Winker led off the 10th by taking Kenley Jansen (0-1) deep with the free runner on second base. The Reds lead the majors with 34 home runs, including five by Winker, who tops the National League with a .382 batting

average.

Marlins 8, Brewers 0: Trevor Rogers pitched six spotless innings and Corey Dickerson finished a triple shy of the cycle in Miami’s win at Milwaukee.

Dickerson drove in three runs, two against Brewers starter Corbin Burnes (2-2).

Royals 3, Tigers 2: Jarrod Dyson doubled and scored the go-ahead run in the fifth inning and Kansas City completed a four-game sweep on the road for the first time since 1999.

The surprising Royals have won a season-high five straight.

Orioles 4, Yankees 2: Cedric Mullins hit two home runs and a double, Matt Harvey pitched six impressive innings and host Baltimore moved one game ahead of last-place New York in the AL East.

Athletics 2, Rays 1: Sean Murphy homered, Sean Manaea got some key defensive help and Oakland bounced back with a road win a day after its 13-game winning streak ended.

Giants 12, Rockies 0: Anthony DeSclafani pitched a three-hitter, Evan Longoria had a two-run double and an RBI single after sitting out three games with a sore left hamstring, and host San Francisco routed Colorado.

SPORTS



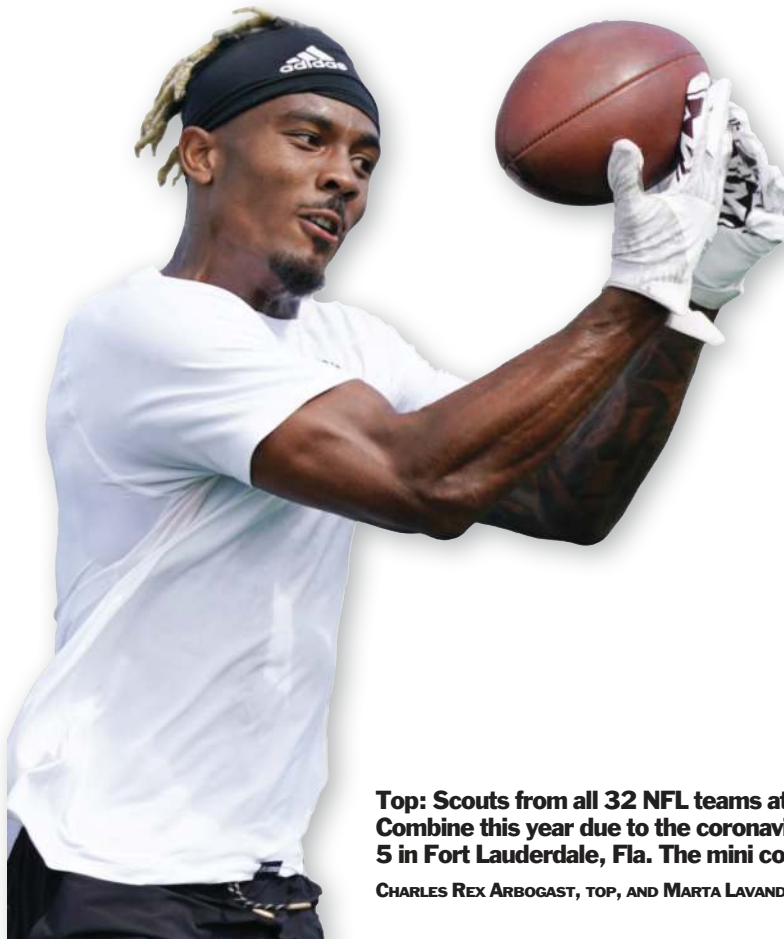
Putting on a Sho

Ohtani leads Angels past Rangers on mound, at plate » **MLB, Page 23**



NFL

Plenty of questions



Unorthodox offseason means unusual, unpredictable draft

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

About the only certainty in the confounding 2021 NFL Draft is Trevor Lawrence going to the Jaguars with the first overall pick.

Beyond that, it's really anybody's guess following the most unorthodox of run-ups to the league's annual parade of prospects.

COVID-19 opt-outs and shortened or shelved seasons in the fall were followed by the combine cancellation and the elimination of in-person interviews this spring because of the pandemic.

Teams had to rely on Zoom calls to get to know players.

"I've said this before: what we're doing is educated guessing," Giants general manager Dave Gettleman

said. "So, this makes us a little more uneducated, not having this personal touch with these players."

Although all 32 teams received the videos from all 103 pro days, the lack of uniform, electronic timing resulted in suspect 40-yard dashes on fast surfaces clocked by hand.

"It's hard to compare apples to oranges. You'd like to have everybody run on the same surface," Chargers GM Tom Telesco said. "That's the biggest part of the Indianapolis combine when the players go in and get their physicals done."

Only 150 players went to Indy this month for physicals, leaving spotty medical reports on many of the athletes heading into the 259-pick draft.

SEE QUESTIONS ON PAGE 19

Top: Scouts from all 32 NFL teams attend Northwestern's Pro Day March 9 in Evanston, Ill. Pro days served as replacements for the NFL Combine this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Left: Texas A&M wide receiver Jhamon Ausbon catches a pass during a mini combine March 5 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The mini combine was organized by House of Athlete.

CHARLES REX ARBOGAST, TOP, AND MARTA LAVANDIER, LEFT/AP

