



**FACES**

In 'Expats' TV show, Kidman happy to share the limelight

Page 15

**MILITARY**

IG says patchwork approach to UFOs may endanger nation

Page 3

**TENNIS**

Sinner rallies from 2 sets down to win Australian Open final

Page 24



**Biden open to closing US-Mexico border 'right now' for deal >> Page 9**

# STARS AND STRIPES

stripes.com

Volume 82 Edition 203 ©SS 2024 MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2024

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)  
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

## Biden: 3 US troops killed in attack

### Iran-backed militia group launched drone strike in northeast Jordan; dozens wounded

By ZEKE MILLER  
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Three American troops were killed and “many” were wounded Sunday in a drone strike in northeast Jordan near the Syrian border, President Joe Biden said. He blamed Iran-backed militias for the first U.S.

fatalities after months of strikes by the groups against American forces across the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war.

With an increase in the risk of military escalation in the region, U.S. officials were working to conclusively identify the precise group responsible for the attack,

but they have assessed that one of several Iranian-backed groups was behind it.

Biden said the United States “will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner (of) our choosing.”

Iran-backed fighters in east Syria began evacuating their posts,

fearing U.S. airstrikes, according to Omar Abu Layla, a Europe-based activist who heads the Deir Ezzor 24 media outlet. He told The Associated Press that the areas are the strongholds of Mayadeen and Boukamal.

According to a U.S. official, the number of troops wounded in the

attack by a one-way attack drone may grow. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not made public, said a large drone struck the base, which two other American officials identified as an installation in

**SEE ATTACK ON PAGE 7**

## From cars to clothes, trade hit by Houthis

By PAUL WISEMAN  
AND MAE ANDERSON  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Car factories have idled in Belgium and Germany. Spring fashion lines are delayed at a popular British department store. A Maryland company that makes hospital supplies doesn't know when to expect parts from Asia.

Attacks on ships in the Red Sea are delivering another shock to global trade, coming on top of pandemic-related logjams at ports and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Houthi rebels in Yemen, seeking to stop Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza, are attacking cargo ships plying the waters connecting Asia with Europe and the United States, forcing traffic away from the Suez Canal and around the tip of Africa. The disruption is causing delays and driving up costs — at a time when the world has yet to vanquish a resurgence of inflation.

**SEE TRADE ON PAGE 6**



OSAMAH ABDULRAHMAN/AP

Houthis attend a rally Friday in support of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and against the U.S.-led airstrikes on Yemen, in Sanaa, Yemen. Since November, Houthi rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea over Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas.

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Weekly shuttered after theft set to relaunch print edition

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — An Oregon weekly newspaper that had to lay off its entire staff after its funds were embezzled by a former employee will relaunch its print edition next month, its editor said, a move made possible in large part by fundraising campaigns and community contributions.

The Eugene Weekly will return to newsstands on Feb. 8 with roughly 25,000 copies, about six weeks after the embezzlement forced the decades-old publica-

tion to halt its print edition, editor Camilla Mortensen said Saturday.

“It has been both terrifying and wonderful,” Mortensen told The Associated Press, describing the emotional rollercoaster of the last few weeks. “I thought it was hard to run a paper. It’s much harder to resurrect a paper.”

The alternative weekly, founded in 1982 and distributed for free in Eugene, one of the largest cities in Oregon, had to lay off its entire 10-person staff right before Christmas. It was around that

time that the paper became aware of at least \$100,000 in unpaid bills and discovered that a now-former employee who had been involved with the paper’s finances had used its bank account to pay themselves around \$90,000, Mortensen said.

Additionally, multiple employees, including Mortensen, realized that money from their paychecks that was supposed to be going into retirement accounts was never deposited. The accused employee was fired after the embezzlement came to light.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Jan. 29)	\$1.06	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8642
British pound (Jan. 29)	\$1.24	Thailand (Baht)	35.62
Japanese yen (Jan. 29)	144.00	Turkey (NewLira)	30.3108
South Korean won (Jan. 29)	1304.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769		
Britain (Pound)	1.2705		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3447		
China (Yuan)	7.0968		
Denmark (Krone)	6.8648		
Egypt (Pound)	30.9014		
Euro	0.9209		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8144		
Hungary (Forint)	356.89		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6855		
Japan (Yen)	148.10		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3077		
Norway (Krone)	10.4167		
Philippines (Peso)	56.34		
Poland (Zloty)	4.02		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7502		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3413		
South Korea (Won)	1337.79		

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

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.36
30-year bond	4.38

### WEATHER OUTLOOK



### TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup ..... 14
- Classified ..... 13
- Comics ..... 17
- Crossword ..... 17
- Faces ..... 15
- Opinion ..... 16
- Sports ..... 18-24

## STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

### EUROPE

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
DSN: 314.583.9111

### MIDDLE EAST

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
DSN: 314.583.9111

### PACIFIC

PacificAdvertising@stripes.com

+81 (42) 552.2511  
DSN: 315.227.7310

# Round-the-world news for America's military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

## STARS AND STRIPES

Mobile • Online • Print

## MILITARY

# IG: DOD's patchwork UFO tracking is a security risk

By PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Defense Department's handling of UFO sightings lacks coordination and could pose a security risk to both the military and the United States as a whole, according to the Pentagon's internal watchdog agency.

Varying processes are used for collecting and analyzing reported sightings of what the Pentagon inspector general calls unidentified anomalous phenomena, or UAP. An unclassified summary of the IG findings was released Thursday.

Collection and analysis of the reports have occurred largely without the input of regional military commands, which are responsible

for detecting and deterring threats against the country, the inspector general said.

The Pentagon "has no overarching UAP policy and, as a result, it lacks assurance that national security and flight safety threats to the United States from UAP have been identified and mitigated," the report said.

Efforts to address the sightings are currently confined to each service branch, it added.

Pilots and military personnel have reported strange phenomena in the sky for years. Many reported sightings are eventually deemed to be benign objects, but others remain unidentifiable and officials fear some of these could be spying tools used by U.S. adversaries.

The full report, containing classified sections, was delivered to Congress in August. It comes after lawmakers at a House panel hearing in July said the Pentagon was not being transparent about how it deals with UFO sightings.

Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., said at the time that the lack of transparency amounted to a "cover-up." The Pentagon denied the claim.

Congress established the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office in July 2022, in part to learn what high levels of government know about UFOs.

"Given the significant public interest ... we are releasing this unclassified summary to be as transparent as possible with the American people about our oversight



U.S. Army Yuma (Ariz.) Proving Ground

**Drones tested at the Army's Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona are sometimes mistaken for UFOs. The Pentagon's lack of coordination in handling reports of UFOs could put the military and the U.S. at risk, according to findings by the Defense Department Inspector General.**

work on this important issue," the inspector general said in a Thursday statement released in conjunction with the report.

Among its recommendations is that various branches of the military integrate existing intelligence

and better coordinate with regional commands. DOD offices largely agreed with or addressed the recommendations, the report said.

wellman.phillip@stripes.com  
@pwwellman

## 'No planned further treatment' for Austin's cancer, doctors say

By MATTHEW ADAMS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin returned to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Friday for a follow-up examination after his prostate cancer surgery last month and is expected to make a full recovery, his doctors said.

"Beyond planned physical therapy and regular post-prostatectomy follow-up appointments, he has no planned further treatment for his cancer," said John Maddox and Gregory Chesnut, doctors at the medical facility in Bethesda, Md.

Austin has been working from home. On Tuesday he participated in a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, his first public appearance since his undisclosed hospitalization for his treatment.

Austin, 70, was released from the hospital on Jan. 15 where he spent two weeks after experiencing complications from surgery, which was conducted Dec. 22. The secretary has come under scrutiny after he failed to notify President Joe Biden and other government officials about his illness and hospital stay.

During a regular health screening in early December, Austin's cancer was detected. He was admitted to the hospital about three weeks later for a prostatectomy, which involves surgery to remove part of the prostate gland. Austin was under general anesthesia during the surgery and left the hospital the following morning.

On Jan. 1, Austin returned to Walter Reed after experiencing pain in his abdomen, hip and leg, the doctors said. He was later found to have a urinary tract infection, and Austin spent days in the intensive care unit.

During Austin's medical treatments, no one at the Defense Department notified the White House, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, Congress or the public for several days.

The Defense Department inspector general announced Jan. 11 that Austin's handling of his hospitalization will be investigated, which followed a Pentagon announcement that it would conduct a 30-day review of the incident.

adams.matthew@stripes.com  
@MatthewAdams60

## Army widens probe into doctor charged in sexual abuse cases

By GARY WARNER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Army investigators are expanding their probe into allegations of sexual abuse by a doctor at Joint Base Lewis-McChord to include bases in Hawaii, Maryland and Iraq where he had been stationed, service officials said.

Maj. Michael Stockin, 38, is scheduled to be arraigned Feb. 23 on charges of abusive sexual contact and indecent viewing of 42 male patients at Madigan Army Medical Center, the hospital at Lewis-McChord. Stockin faces 54 charges stemming from incidents between November 2019 and April 2022 at the combined Army-Air Force base near Tacoma, Wash., according to Michelle McCaskill, spokeswoman for the Army Office of Special Trial Counsel at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Stockin will be the first soldier prosecuted under a new law that removes commanders from deciding whether to proceed with certain criminal cases, including most sex crimes. The new Office of Special Trial Counsel will handle the prosecution.

The new law covers 13 offenses, including murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, domestic violence, stalking, child pornography offenses and most sexual assault and sexual misconduct offenses. Sexual harassment will become part of the counsel's jurisdiction on Jan. 1, 2025.

All the allegations against Stockin occurred when he was a staff anesthesiologist and pain management physician at Madigan, the Army's second-largest hospital. Some patients claim they were abused multiple times.

More charges are possible. McCaskill said the Army Criminal Investigation Division is reviewing whether Stockin could face more charges of sexual abuse from earlier assignments, starting in 2013 when he joined the Army to his latest assignment at Lewis-McChord, which began in July 2019.

In the six years before arriving at Lewis-McChord, Stockin was assigned to Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii for a year, Walter

Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., for five years, and a five-month deployment to Iraq.

Robert Capovilla, a former Army lawyer representing Stockin, could not be reached Friday for comment.

Stockin is facing 48 charges under Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. It deals with four levels of sex crimes: rape, sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact and abusive sexual contact.

Stockin is also charged with five violations of Article 120c of the UCMJ, which deals with "other sexual misconduct," including looking at private areas of another person, recording or distributing materials of a sexual nature, pandering (inducing into prostitution), and indecent exposure. Stockin is charged with indecent viewing.

The Army has said when allegations of sexual abuse surfaced against Stockin, the doctor was ordered to stop seeing patients in February 2022.

warnar.gary@stripes.com

## Police accuse Marine Corps civilian of marijuana possession on Okinawa

By MARI HIGA  
AND ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese police have arrested a civilian employee of the U.S. Marine Corps on Okinawa on suspicion of possessing marijuana.

Clinton Michael Battles, 51, was taken into custody around 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday at his home in Ginowan city, a spokesman for the Ginowan Police Station said by phone Friday. Some Japanese officials may speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

Police searched Battles' home based on a tip that he may have the drug in his possession. Police found 0.77 grams of dried marijuana, less

than one-fifth the weight of an American nickel, in a plastic bag, the spokesman said.

Marijuana possession can bring up to five years in prison under Japan's Cannabis Control Act.

Battles, at the time of his arrest, told police it was "for his personal use," the spokesman said.

Police are trying to determine

Battles' source for the drug, the spokesman added.

Maj. Rob Martins, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing spokesman, confirmed that Battles is a civilian who works with Marine Aircraft Group 36 at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

Battles was still in Japanese custody as of Friday afternoon, Martins said by email Friday.

Prosecutors decide charges under the Japanese justice system. Battles' case was referred to prosecutors on Wednesday, a spokesman for the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office said by phone Friday.

higa.mari@stripes.com  
@marihiga21  
wilson.alex@stripes.com  
@AlexMNWilson

## PACIFIC

# Biden aide urges China to press Iran on attacks

BY KANIS LEUNG  
AND ZEKE MILLER  
*Associated Press*

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan pressed Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during talks in Thailand to use China's influence with Iran to ease tensions in the Middle East. The officials also agreed to work toward arranging a call between President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

The meetings Friday and Saturday in Bangkok, which followed up on the presidents' discussions in November in California, took place after a ruling-party candidate opposed by Beijing won Taiwan's recent presidential election and U.S. and Chinese military officials resumed a once-frozen dialogue. They played out as attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen continue to threaten global shipping in the Red Sea.

A senior U.S. official said Sullivan cited China's extensive economic

leverage over Iran and emphasized that the destabilizing effect of the Houthi attacks on international commerce. The official noted that China has publicly called for lower tensions, but said it was too soon to tell whether Beijing was using its diplomatic muscle to press Tehran on the matter. The official was not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversations between Sullivan and Wang and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said Wang said Washington should stand by a commitment not to support independence for Taiwan. Wang said Taiwan's election, won by Lai Ching-te, the current vice president, did not alter the Chinese position that the island is part of China and that the biggest challenge in U.S.-China relations is the issue of "Taiwan independence," according to a statement from the ministry.

Biden has said he does not sup-

port independence, but U.S. law requires a credible defense for Taiwan and for the U.S. to treat all threats to the island as matters of "grave concern."

The U.S. official said it was not clear when the next Biden-Xi conversation would happen, but that the officials hoped it would take place in the coming months.

Wang and Sullivan previously met on the Mediterranean island nation of Malta and in Vienna last year before the Biden-Xi meeting in California.

In November, both sides showcased modest agreements to combat illegal fentanyl and reestablish military communications, keeping the relationship from growing any worse. The U.S.-China Counternarcotics Working Group is set to hold its first meeting on Tuesday. American officials say fentanyl and its precursors are largely manufactured in China.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan

as its own territory and in recent years has shown its displeasure at political activities in Taiwan by sending military planes and ships. Earlier Saturday, Taiwan's defense ministry said China had sent more than 30 warplanes including SU-30 fighters, and six navy vessels toward the island during a 24-hour period, including 13 warplanes that crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait — an unofficial boundary that's considered a buffer between its territory and the mainland.

Wang also said China and the U.S. should use the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries this year as an opportunity to reflect on past experiences and treat each other as equals, rather than adopting a condescending attitude.

The countries should "be committed to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, building a correct way for

China and the U.S. to interact," the statement quoted Wang as saying.

Taiwan has said six Chinese balloons either flew over the island or through airspace just north of it, days after the self-governing island held its election. Lai's Democratic Progressive Party largely campaigned on self-determination, social justice and a rejection of China's threats.

Apart from cross-strait issues, Sullivan and Wang also discussed Russia's war against Ukraine, the Middle East, North Korea, the South China Sea, and Myanmar, the White House said. Sullivan and Wang talked about progress toward holding a dialog this spring between U.S. and Chinese officials on artificial intelligence.

Sullivan highlighted that although Washington and Beijing are in competition, both sides have to "prevent it from veering into conflict or confrontation," according to a White House summary of the meeting.



AHN YOUNG-JOON/AP

A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea's missile launch during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, on Sunday.

## S. Korea: North fired cruise missiles

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's military said Sunday that North Korea fired several cruise missiles that flew over waters near a major military shipyard on the country's eastern coast, extending a streak in weapons tests that are worsening tensions with the United States, South Korea and Japan.

The launches followed a separate round of North Korean cruise missile tests last week and a Jan. 14 test-firing of the country's first solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile. Those tests reflect North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's efforts to expand his arsenal of weapons designed to over-

whelm missile defenses in South Korea and Japan and remote U.S. targets in the Pacific, including Guam.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said they detected the missiles over waters near the North Korean port of Sinpo, where the North has a major shipyard building key naval vessels, including missile-firing submarines.

The South's military didn't immediately provide specific launch details, including the number of missiles fired, how far they flew and whether they were launched from land or naval assets.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have increased in recent months as Kim continues to accel-

erate his weapons development and issue provocative threats of nuclear conflict with the U.S. and its Asian allies.

The U.S., South Korea and Japan in response have been expanding their combined military exercises, which Kim portrays as invasion rehearsals, and sharpening their deterrence strategies built around nuclear-capable U.S. assets.

North Korea said its launches last week involved a new cruise missile called Pulhwasal-3-31 and described the test as part of regular efforts to develop its military. The North described that missile as "strategic," implying an intent to arm it with nuclear weapons.

## South Korea starts production on new UAV to boost spy capabilities

BY DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Korea is mass-producing its own unmanned aerial vehicle, 14 years in development, to boost its reconnaissance capabilities against the North.

Production began recently for the medium-altitude UAVs, according to a news release Thursday from South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration.

The agency signed onto the \$353 million project with three defense contractors — Korean Air, the country's primary airline, and Seoul-based firms LIG Nex1 and Hanhwa Systems — in December; development began in 2008.

The UAV is expected to fly at an altitude of roughly six to seven miles for South Korea's air force and coast guard, with the possibility of it being exported to other countries, according to the release.

South Korea is giving "top priority" to tools that can address threats from the North, according to a five-year prospectus released last month by the Ministry of National Defense. The list includes manned and unmanned reconnaissance drones that could monitor North Korean "provocations ... in early stages."

On Dec. 26, 2022, five small North Korean drones were detect-

ed crossing the South's airspace in the first such flight in five years. The drones were not recovered, but they prompted South Korea's military to scramble fighter jets and helicopters and suspend civilian flights.

South Korea's military also responded with "corresponding measures" by flying drones into the North's airspace to surveil military installations, according to a ministry statement at the time.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol condemned the South's ability to respond to the incursion and announced the military would create the Drone Operations Command specifically tasked with drone warfare.

One month after the incident, a special investigation by the U.N. Command's Military Armistice Commission found that both Koreas violated the 1953 armistice by their actions.

The North's state-run Korean Central News Agency reported Jan. 19 that its military successfully tested a nuclear-capable underwater drone.

Developing a "so-called underwater nuclear weapons system" is evidence of the communist regime's multiple violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions, the South's military said in a statement.

choi.david@stripes.com  
@choiboy

## PACIFIC



PHOTOS BY ASKIA COLLINS/U.S. Navy

Members of the U.S. 7th Fleet band perform for the USS Antietam as it departs Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on Friday.

## USS Antietam shifts its homeport to Hawaii after 11 years in Japan

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS Antietam steamed out of Tokyo Bay on Friday, concluding 11 years of service at the homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Sailors manned the rails in their dress blue uniforms as the guided-missile cruiser left Yokosuka, bound for its new home in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the fleet said in a news release Friday.

“For more than a decade, USS Antietam enjoyed being part of the Yokosuka community,” the cruiser’s skipper, Capt. Victor Garza, said in the release. “Antietam was at the forefront of our nation’s efforts to protect peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific.”

The ship is moving to Hawaii as part of a “planned rotation of forces,” 7th Fleet said. Taking its place will be the guided-missile destroyer USS McCampbell, previously homeported in Everett, Wash., according to Task Force 70 spokesman Seth Koenig.

Koenig declined to comment on when the McCampbell would arrive, citing operational security concerns.

“We have no additional departures or arrivals to announce as part of the planned rotation of forces at this time,” he said in an email Friday.

The McCampbell left Yokosuka in July 2020 for a scheduled midlife modernization in Oregon before joining the 3rd Fleet.

The Antietam arrived in Yokosuka in February 2013 and



The Antietam, a guided-missile cruiser, is shifting its homeport to Hawaii.

swapped crews with its sister ship the USS Cowpens.

In the years that followed, the Antietam regularly deployed with the USS George Washington and USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier strike groups; it also participated in freedom-of-navigation operations and transits of the Taiwan Strait.

One deployment included a monthlong relief mission to the Philippines following the widespread devastation dealt by Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013.

In January 2017, the Antietam ran aground on shoals in Tokyo Bay just outside Yokosuka. It was anchored near the base’s ammunition storage area when it drifted into nearby rocks.

Approximately 1,100 gallons of hydraulic fluid leaked into the bay; the Navy ultimately relieved the ship’s commander at the time, Capt. Joseph Carrigan, due to a loss of confidence in his abilities.

Months later, the Antietam incident was largely overshadowed by two separate collisions involving the guided-missile destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS McCain, which resulted in a combined death toll of 10 sailors.

Prior to the Antietam’s departure, the crew of the Japanese guided-missile destroyer JS Kiri-shima presented the U.S. crew with a plaque commemorating the warship’s time in Japan, 7th Fleet said.

“On behalf of the crew, I want to express my appreciation for our Japanese hosts, who have become our colleagues, friends and family,” Garza said in the fleet’s release. “We’re proud of the relationships we built with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and with like-minded nations and navies throughout the region.”

wilson.alex@stripes.com  
@AlexMNWilson

# Marine general promises to ‘deter conflict’

## New commander takes charge of Indo-Pacific’s rapid-response force

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION FUTENMA, Okinawa — A veteran of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan took command of the Marine Corps’ rapid-response force here Friday as tensions with China are on the rise.

Lt. Gen. Roger Turner took leadership of the III Marine Expeditionary Force from Lt. Gen. James Bierman Jr. during a chilly ceremony inside a hangar along MCAS Futenma’s flight line.

“It’s our job to train and build readiness for world class naval expeditionary forces for the defense of Japan and also for the security of the rest of the region,” Turner told reporters at a press conference following the ceremony. “Our main goal here is to deter conflict and to respond to humanitarian crisis, but we are also prepared to aggressively defend shall diplomacy fail.”

The 40-year service veteran and Bronze Star recipient arrives at a time of heightened tensions in the region. China, labeled the top global “pacing challenge” in the Pentagon’s 2022 National Defense Strategy, has rapidly expanded its military and raised provocations with U.S. allies Japan and the Philippines in the East and South China Seas. The United States is bound by treaty to come to their defense.

Japan has been fortifying its southern island chain in recent months and has deployed surface-to-ship missiles to its island bases.

Turner is a veteran of Desert Storm and combat in Ramadi in Iraq and Helmand province in Afghanistan, according to his Marine Corps biography. He previously served as acting deputy commandant for plans, policies and operations at the Pentagon.

Bierman, who led III MEF out of the COVID-19 pandemic when he took command in November 2021, is known for overseeing expanding partnerships with the Japan Self-Defense Forces. He also worked to implement much of the Corps’ Force Design 2030 modernization effort.

The island-fighting doctrine implemented by former commandant Gen. David Berger calls for



MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Gen. Roger Turner speaks to reporters after taking command at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, on Friday.

inserting smaller, mobile units within range of enemy missiles to seize and hold key islands and deny enemy vessels access to the surrounding seas.

Bierman also oversaw the November launch of the service’s new seaborne quick-reaction force, the 12th Marine Littoral Regiment. His accomplishments were lauded by Commandant Gen. Eric Smith.

“With you at the helm, III MEF ensured our vital strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region,” Smith said in a statement read during Friday’s ceremony. “Your efforts supporting and partnering with our allies will have lasting and positive impacts for years to come.”

Bierman will take over as deputy commandant for plans, policies and operations, III MEF spokesman 2nd Lt. Owen Hitchcock said by email Tuesday.

Friday’s ceremony was moved inside due to inclement weather. Lt. Gen. William Jurney presided with an array of aircraft and weaponry arrayed across the flight line.

“The cutting edge of the Pacific Marines is III MEF,” he said. Turner is “the right leader in the right place, at the right time.”

III MEF, based at Marine base Camp Courtney, consists of 27,000 Marines and sailors at camps and air stations on Okinawa, on main-island Japan and in Hawaii. It’s a “force in readiness” capable of responding to a crisis or taking up major combat operations, according to the III MEF website.

burke.matt@stripes.com  
@MatthewMBurke1

## MIDEAST

# Iran claims launch of 3 satellites into space is successful

By JON GAMBRELL  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Iran said Sunday it successfully launched three satellites into space with a rocket that had multiple failures in the past, the latest for a program that the West says improves Tehran's ballistic missiles.

The launch comes as heightened tensions grip the wider Middle East over Israel's continued war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, sparking fears of a regional conflict.

While Iran has not intervened militarily in the conflict, it has faced increased pressure within its theocracy for action after a deadly Islamic State suicide bombing earlier this month and as proxy groups like Yemen's Houthi rebels conduct attacks linked to the war. Meanwhile, Western nations remain worried about Iran's rapidly expanding nuclear pro-

gram.

Footage released by Iranian state television showed a nighttime launch for the Simorgh rocket. An Associated Press analysis of the footage showed that it took place at the Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's rural Semnan province.

"The roar of the Simorgh (rocket) resonated in our country's sky and infinite space," said Abbas Rasooli, a state TV reporter, in the footage.

State TV named the launched satellites Mahda, Kayhan-2 and Hatef-1. It described the Mahda as a research satellite, while the Kayhan and the Hatef were nanosatellites focused on global positioning and communication respectively. Iran's Information and Communications Technology Minister Isa Zarepour said the Mahda had already sent signals back to Earth.



IRANIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY/AP

This photo released by the Iranian Defense Ministry on Sunday claims to show the Simorgh, or "Phoenix," satellite carrier before being launched into space at Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's Semnan province.

There have been five failed launches in a row for the Simorgh program, a satellite-carrying rocket. The Simorgh, or "Phoenix," rocket failures have been part of a series of setbacks in recent years for Iran's civilian space program, including fatal fires and a launchpad rocket explosion that drew the attention of former Presi-

dent Donald Trump.

The footage showed the rocket launched Sunday bore the slogan "We Can" in Farsi, likely referring to the previous failures.

The Simorgh is a two-stage, liquid-fueled rocket the Iranians described as being designed to place satellites into a low Earth orbit.

However, the U.S. intelligence community's 2023 worldwide threat assessment said the development of satellite launch vehicles "shortens the timeline" for Iran to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile because it uses similar technology. That report specifically cites the Simorgh as a possible dual-use rocket.

## Trade: Many companies say they have yet to see meaningful impact

FROM PAGE 1

"What's happened right now is short-term chaos, and chaos leads to increased costs," said Ryan Petersen, CEO of the supply chain management company Flexport. "Every ship that gets rerouted has 10,000 containers on it. It's a lot of emails and phone calls getting made to replan each of those container journeys."

Adding to the bedlam in global shipping is what Petersen calls a "double whammy": Passage through another crucial trade corridor — the Panama Canal — is restricted by low water levels caused by drought. And shippers are in a rush to move goods before Chinese factories shut down for the Feb. 10-17 Lunar New Year holiday.

The threat grows considerably the longer the war in Gaza drags on. Disruption to Red Sea trade lasting a year could surge goods inflation by up to 2%, Petersen says, piling on pain while the world already struggles with higher prices for groceries, rent and more. That also could mean even higher interest rates, which have weakened economies.

For now, Man & Machine in Landover, Md., is awaiting a shipment from Taiwan and greater China. It's been one setback after another for the company, which makes washable keyboards and accessories for hospitals and other customers.

Founder and CEO Clifton Brou-

mand usually gets a shipment of components about once a month, but the latest delivery, which departed Asia four weeks ago, is delayed. The normal route — three weeks via the Suez Canal — has been shut down by the Houthi attacks.

Rerouting to the Panama Canal didn't work either — the shipment was stymied there by the drought-related mess.

Now, it might have to cross the Pacific to Los Angeles and come by truck or train to Maryland. Broumand has no idea when the products will arrive.

"It's annoying, and it's interesting. I think our customers, everybody understands. This is not like, 'Why didn't you plan this?' — who knew?" he said. "We call our customers and say, 'Hey, it's going to be delayed. This is why it is.' Nobody likes it, but it's not going to kill anybody, it's just another frustration."

Other industries are seeing similar hassles.

Electric carmaker Tesla has to shut down its factory near Berlin from Monday to Feb. 11 because of shipment delays. The Chinese-owned Swedish car brand Volvo idled its assembly line in Ghent, Belgium, where it makes station wagons and SUVs, for three days this month while waiting for a key part for transmissions.

Production at a Suzuki Motor Corp. plant in Hungary stopped for a week because of a delay in

getting engines and other parts from Japan.

The British retail chain Marks & Spencer warned that the turmoil would delay new spring clothing and home goods collections that were due in February and March. Chief executive Stuart Machin said the Red Sea trouble was "impacting everyone and something we're very focused on."

Roughly 20% of the clothes and shoes imported into the U.S. arrive via the Suez Canal, said Steve Lamar, CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association. For Europe, the impact is even bigger: 40% of clothes and 50% of shoes traverse the Red Sea.

"This is a crisis that has global implications for the maritime shipping industry," Lamar said.

As of Jan. 19, Flexport says, almost 25% of global shipping capacity is being or will be diverted from the Red Sea, adding thousands of miles and a week or two to trips.

The cost of shipping a standard 40-foot container from Asia to northern Europe has surged from less than \$1,500 in mid-December to nearly \$5,500. Getting Asian cargoes to the Mediterranean is even costlier: almost \$6,800, up from \$2,400 in mid-December, according to the freight booking platform Freightos.

But things could be worse. At the height of supply chain backups two years ago, it cost \$15,000 to ship a container from Asia to

northern Europe and nearly \$14,200 to take one from Asia to the Mediterranean.

"In terms of supply chain disruptions, we're not even close to what was happening during the pandemic," said Katheryn Russ, a University of California, Davis, economist.

In 2021 and 2022, American consumers, stir-crazy from COVID-19 lockdowns and armed with government relief checks, went on a spending spree, ordering furniture, sports equipment and other goods. Their orders overwhelmed factories, ports and freight yards, leading to delays, shortages and higher prices.

Things are different now. After that supply chain mess, shipping companies expanded their fleets. They have more ships to cope with shocks.

"The market is in a state of overcapacity," said Judah Levine, Freightos' head of research, "which happens to be a good thing. There should be enough capacity to accommodate this disruption."

Global demand also has cooled off — partly because the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks have raised interest rates to combat inflation and partly because China's powerhouse economy is sputtering. Inflation has dropped over the 18 months.

"There are really big forces bringing down inflation," said Russ, who was a White House economic adviser in the Obama ad-

ministration. "It's hard to see (the Red Sea disruption) would substantially muck up the declines in inflation that we've been seeing beyond a tenth of a percentage point here and there."

Many companies say they have yet to see meaningful impact. Retailer Target said most of its products don't pass through the Suez Canal and was "confident in our ability to get guests the products they want and need."

BMW said: "All lights are green... our factory supplies are secure." Norwegian fertilizer giant Yara said it was "only mildly impacted by the transit challenges in the Red Sea."

Carlos Tavares, CEO of automaker Stellantis, has said: "So far, it's OK. Things are moving well."

The respite may not last. If shippers avoid the Suez Canal for a year, Flexport CEO Petersen warned, "it's a really big deal." The higher costs would lead to "goods inflation of 1 to 2%."

Jan Hoffmann, a U.N. shipping expert, warned Thursday that Red Sea shipping snags posed a risk to global food security by slowing the distribution of grain to parts of Africa and Asia, which depend on wheat from Europe and the Black Sea area.

It would be even worse if the Middle East conflict widens and drives up oil prices, which are now lower than they were the day before Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

MIDEAST



This satellite photo from Planet Labs PBC shows a military base known as Tower 22 in northeastern Jordan, on Oct. 12.

AP

# Attack: Two officials say Tower 22 was site of strike

FROM PAGE 1

Jordan known as Tower 22. It is along the Syrian border and is used largely by troops involved in the advise-and-assist mission for Jordanian forces.

The small installation, which Jordan does not publicly disclose, includes U.S. engineering, aviation, logistics and security troops.

The U.S. military base at al-Tanf in Syria is just 12 miles north of Tower 22. The Jordanian installation provides a critical logistical hub for U.S. forces in Syria, including those at al-Tanf, which is near the intersection of the Iraq, Syria and Jordan borders.

Jordanian state television quoted Muhannad Mubaidin, a government spokesman, as insisting the attack happened outside of the kingdom across the border in Syria. U.S. officials insisted that the attack took place in Jordan.

U.S. troops long have used Jordan, a kingdom bordering Iraq, Israel, the Palestinian territory of the West Bank, Saudi Arabia and Syria, as a basing point. U.S. Central Command said 25 service members were injured the attack in addition to the three killed.

Some 3,000 American troops typically are stationed in Jordan.

Since Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip began, U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria have faced drone and missile attacks on their bases. Sunday's attack marks the first targeting of American troops in Jordan during the war and the first to result in the loss of American lives.

Other attacks have left troops seriously injured, including with traumatic brain injuries.

The U.S. in recent months has struck targets in Iraq, Syria and Yemen to respond to attacks on American forces in the region and to deter Iranian-backed Houthi rebels from continuing to threaten commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

Biden, who was in Columbia, S.C., on Sunday, was briefed by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, national security adviser Jake Sullivan, and principal deputy national security adviser Jon Finer, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said. He was expected to meet again with his national security team later Sunday.

The president said the service members were "risking their own safety for the safety of their fellow Americans, and our allies and partners with whom we stand in the fight against terrorism. It is a fight we will not cease."

Syria is still in the midst of a civil war and long has been a launch pad for Iranian-backed forces there, including the Lebanese militia Hezbollah. Iraq has multiple Iranian-backed Shiite militias operating there as well.

Jordan, a staunch Western ally and a crucial power in Jerusalem for its oversight of holy sites there, is suspected of launching airstrikes in Syria to disrupt drug smugglers, including one that killed nine people earlier this month.

An umbrella group for Iran-backed factions known as the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks against bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria since the Israel-Hamas war began.

# UN official calls for resumed funding of Palestinian aid agency

By NAJIB JOBAIN, WAFAA SHURAF AND MELANIE LIDMAN  
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — The secretary-general of the United Nations on Sunday called on countries to resume funding the main agency providing aid in the Gaza Strip after a dozen of its employees were accused of taking part in the Hamas attack on Israel that ignited the war four months ago.

The dispute engulfing the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees came as U.S. officials said negotiators were closing in on a cease-fire agreement. The emerging deal would bring a two-month halt to the deadliest-ever Israeli-Palestinian violence, which has stoked instability across the Middle East.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the agency known as UNRWA would be forced to scale back aid to more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza as soon as February. The coastal enclave is in the grip of a severe humanitarian crisis, with a quarter of the population facing starvation as fighting and Israeli restrictions hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged territory.

"The abhorrent alleged acts of these staff members must have consequences," Guterres said in a statement.

"But the tens of thousands of men and women who work for UNRWA, many in some of the most dangerous situations for hu-

manitarian workers, should not be penalized. The dire needs of the desperate populations they serve must be met," he added.

He said that of the 12 employees accused of taking part in the attack, nine were immediately terminated, one was confirmed dead and two others were still being identified. He said they would be held accountable, including through criminal prosecution.

## Lifeline may 'collapse'

UNRWA provides basic services, from medical care to education, for Palestinian families who fled or were driven out of what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding the country's creation. They now live in built-up refugee camps in Gaza, the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The refugees and their descendants number about 6 million, and in Gaza they are the majority of the population. UNRWA, which has some 13,000 staff members in Gaza, expanded its operations during the war and runs shelters that house hundreds of thousands of newly displaced people.

More than 2 million of the territory's 2.3 million people depend on the agency's programs for "sheer survival," including food and shelter, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said. It's a lifeline that could "collapse any time now," he said after the funding was suspended.

The United States, which is the

agency's largest donor, immediately cut funding over the weekend, followed by eight other countries, including Britain, Germany and Italy. Together, the nine countries provided nearly 60% of UNRWA's budget in 2022.

## Progress in pause talks

Two senior Biden administration officials said U.S. negotiators were making progress on a potential agreement under which Israel would pause military operations against Hamas for two months in exchange for the release of more than 100 remaining hostages.

The officials, who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations, said that emerging terms of the yet-to-be sealed deal would play out over two phases, with the remaining women, elderly and wounded hostages to be released by Hamas in a first 30-day phase. The emerging deal also calls for Israel to allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza.

More than 100 hostages, mainly women and children, were released in November in exchange for a weeklong cease-fire and the release of 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

CIA Director Bill Burns is expected to discuss the contours of the emerging agreement when he meets Sunday in France with David Barnea, the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel.



Palestinians walk through a makeshift tent camp in Rafah on Saturday.

FATIMA SHBAIR/AP

# Exploring the Beauty of the Pacific

Pick up the magazine or get it online

STARS AND STRIPES

## WAR IN UKRAINE

# US plans for Ukraine don't focus on territory

BY KAREN DEYOUNG,  
MICHAEL BIRNBAUM,  
ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN  
AND EMILY RAUHALA  
*The Washington Post*

Still smarting from last year's failed counteroffensive in Ukraine, the Biden administration is putting together a new strategy that will de-emphasize winning back territory and focus instead on helping Ukraine fend off new Russian advances while moving toward a long-term goal of strengthening its fighting force and economy.

The emerging plan is a sharp change from last year, when the U.S. and allied militaries rushed training and sophisticated equipment to Kyiv in hopes that it could quickly push back Russian forces occupying eastern and southern Ukraine. That effort foundered, largely on Russia's heavily fortified minefields and front line trenches.

"It's pretty clear that it will be difficult for them to try to mount the same kind of major push on all fronts that they tried to do last year," a senior administration official said.

The idea now is to position Ukraine to hold its position on the battlefield for now, but "put them on a different trajectory to be much stronger by the end of 2024 ... and get them on a more sustainable path," said the senior official, one of several who described the internal policymaking on the con-

dition of anonymity.

The U.S. planning is part of a multilateral effort by nearly three dozen countries backing Ukraine to pledge long-term security and economic support — both out of necessity, given the disappointing results of last year's counteroffensive and the conviction that a similar effort this year would likely bring the same outcome, and as a demonstration of enduring resolve to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Each is preparing a document outlining its specific commitments spanning up to a decade in the future. Britain made its 10-year agreement with Ukraine public last week, signed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv. It outlined contributions to "Maritime Security, Air, Air Defense, Artillery and Armor" as well as fiscal support and access to its financial sector. France is expected to be next, with an upcoming visit to Ukraine by President Emmanuel Macron.

### Future-proofing Ukraine

According to U.S. officials, the American document will guarantee support for short-term military operations as well as build a future Ukrainian military force that can deter Russian aggression. It will include specific promises and programs to help protect, reconstitute and expand Ukraine's industrial and export base, and assist the country with political re-

forms needed for full integration into Western institutions.

Not incidentally, a U.S. official said, the hope is that the long-term promise — again assuming congressional buy-in — will also "future-proof" aid for Ukraine against the possibility that former President Donald Trump wins his reelection bid.

As the White House continues to try to persuade lawmakers, a second senior administration official emphasized that the strategy doesn't mean that the Ukrainians are just going to build their own defensive trenches "and sit behind them" all year. "There is still going to be swapping of territory" in small cities and villages with minimal strategic value, "missile launches and drones" from both sides, and Russian "attacks on civilian infrastructure," this official said.

Zelenskyy, meanwhile, insists that Ukraine remains on the offensive. Plans for 2024 are "not just defense," he said in a recent video address. "We want our country to retain the initiative, not the enemy."

But U.S. policymakers who have met recently with him in private say Zelenskyy has doubts about how ambitious to be in the coming year without clarity about U.S. aid.

"We get asked what's our plan, but we need to understand what resources we're going to have," Ukrainian lawmaker Roman Kos-

tenko said. "Right now, everything points to the possibility that we will have less than last year, when we tried to do a counteroffensive and it didn't work out. ... If we will have even less, then it's clear what the plan will be. It will be defense."

### Ukraine's future

Along the front line, the Ukrainian military has started preparing accordingly, aiming to replicate Russia's layered defenses of trenches and minefields in the southeastern Zaporizhzhia region that hampered last year's counteroffensive.

"Normal soldiers aren't very interested in [Ukrainian] politics and foreign politics," said a Ukrainian commander in the eastern Donetsk region, who was not authorized to speak publicly. "But when you feel for yourselves that it's not enough, like now with ammunition, mortars, shells, that immediately triggers worry. You can fight, but you have to have something to fight with."

U.S. policymakers say they expect the war will eventually end through negotiations — but also that they don't think Putin will be serious about talks this year, in part because he holds out hope that Trump will win back the presidency in November and dial back support to Kyiv.

Trump, who has long touted a special relationship with Putin, said months ago that if he is re-

turned to the White House, he "will have that war settled in one day, 24 hours." Zelenskyy, in last week's television interview, called that claim "very dangerous" and invited Trump to share whatever plan he might have.

The long-term strategy to transform Ukraine for the future has its roots in a G-7 declaration of support last summer in which Western leaders promised to build a "sustainable" military force interoperable with the West, and to strengthen Ukraine's "economic stability and resilience."

Even so, the policy holds risks, including political ones, if Ukrainians begin to blame their government for stagnant front lines. Likewise, in Western capitals, officials are keenly aware that their citizens' patience with funding Ukraine's war is not infinite.

Amid the planning, Washington also seems to be readying the argument that, even if Ukraine is not going to regain all of its territory in the near term, it needs significant ongoing assistance to be able to defend itself and become an integral part of the West.

"We can see what Ukraine's future can and should be, irrespective of exactly where lines are drawn," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said earlier this month at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "And that's a future where it stands strongly on its own two feet militarily, economically, democratically."

## US approves sale of F-16 fighters to Turkey

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration has approved the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey following the Turkish government's ratification last week of Sweden's membership in NATO. The move is a significant development in the expansion of the alliance, which has taken on additional importance since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The State Department notified Congress of its approval of the \$23 billion F-16 sale to Turkey, along with a companion \$8.6 billion sale of advanced F-35 fighter jets to Greece, late Friday. The move came just hours after Turkey deposited its "instrument of ratification" for Sweden's accession to NATO with Washington, which is the repository for alliance documents and after several key members of Congress lifted their objections.

The sale to Turkey includes 40 new F-16s and equipment to modernize 79 of its existing F-16 fleet. The sale to Greece includes 40

F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters and related equipment.

NATO ally Turkey has long sought to upgrade its F-16 fleet and had made its ratification of Sweden's membership contingent on the approval of the sale of the new planes. The Biden administration had supported the sale, but lawmakers expressed objections due to human rights concerns.

Those objections, including from the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sens. Ben Cardin, D-Md., and Jim Risch, R-Idaho, have now been overcome, officials said.

Cardin said in statement Friday that he still had concerns about Turkey's rights record, but had agreed to the sale based on commitments Turkey has made to improve it.

"I look forward to beginning this new chapter in our relationship with Turkey, expanding the NATO alliance, and working with our global allies in standing up to ongoing Russian aggression against its



HEATHER LEV/AP

**The U.S. OK'd the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey after the government ratified Sweden's membership to NATO.**

peaceful neighbors," he said.

Turkey had delayed its approval of Sweden's NATO membership for more than a year, ostensibly because it believed Sweden did not take Turkey's national security concerns seriously enough, including its fight against Kurdish militants and other groups that Ankara considers to be security threats. The delays had frustrated the U.S. and other NATO allies, almost all of whom had been swift to accept both Sweden and Finland into the alliance after the Nordic states dropped their longstanding military neutrality following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

## Ukraine says corrupt officials stole \$40M meant to buy arms for Russia war

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Employees from a Ukrainian arms firm conspired with defense ministry officials to embezzle almost \$40 million earmarked to buy 100,000 mortar shells for the war with Russia, Ukraine's security service reported.

The SBU said late Saturday that five people have been charged, with one person detained while trying to cross the Ukrainian border. If found guilty, they face up to 12 years in prison.

The investigation comes as Kyiv attempts to clamp down on corruption in a bid to speed up its membership in the European Union and NATO.

Officials from both blocs have demanded widespread anti-graft reforms before Kyiv can join them.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was elected on an anti-corruption platform in 2019, long before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February

2022.

Both the president and his aides have portrayed the recent firings of top officials, notably that of Ivan Bakanov, former head of the State Security Service, in July 2022, as proof of their efforts to crack down on graft.

Security officials say that the current investigation dates back to August 2022, when officials signed a contract for artillery shells worth \$39.6 million with arms firm Lviv Arsenal.

After receiving payment, company employees were supposed to transfer the funds to a business registered abroad, which would then deliver the ammunition to Ukraine.

However, the goods were never delivered and the money was instead sent to various accounts in Ukraine and the Balkans, investigators said. Ukraine's prosecutor general says that the funds have since been seized and will be returned to the country's defense budget.

## NATION

# Biden open to closing US-Mexico border

## President says he'll act 'right now' if Congress passes proposed deal

By ZEKE MILLER,  
COLLEEN LONG  
AND MEG KINNARD  
*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Bidding to salvage a border deal in Congress that also would unlock money for Ukraine, President Joe Biden offered fresh assurances Saturday night that he would be willing to close the U.S.-Mexico border if lawmakers would only send him a bill to sign.

Biden — also eager to disarm GOP criticism of his handling of migration at the border — said at a political event in South Carolina that he would shut down the border “right now” if Congress passed the proposed deal. The framework hasn’t been formally agreed to by Senate Democrats and Republicans and would face an uncertain future in the GOP-controlled House.

“A bipartisan bill would be good for America and help fix our broken immigration system and allow speedy access for those who deserve to be here, and Congress needs to get it done,” Biden said. “It’ll also give me as president, the emergency authority to shut down the border until it could get back under control. If that bill were the law today, I’d shut down the border right now and fix it quickly.”

The deal being negotiated in Congress would require the U.S. to shutter the border if roughly 5,000 migrants cross illegally on any given day. Some one-day totals last year exceeded 10,000.

Former President Donald Trump has been pressuring Republicans for weeks to kill the negotiations. He’s loath to give a win to Biden on an issue that animated the Republican’s successful 2016

campaign and that he wants to use as he seeks to return to the White House. Negotiators had appeared to be closing in on a deal, but it started to fray after Trump’s admonitions to conservative lawmakers grew stronger.

In a written statement on Friday evening, Biden said the deal would allow him “a new emergency authority” to close the border. He added: “And if given that authority, I would use it the day I sign the bill into law.”

### “President Biden and Congress must abandon these proposals and heed voters’ demands for fair and effective immigration policies.”

Deirdre Schifeling  
chief political and advocacy officer,  
American Civil Liberties Union

It was a stark claim from a Democratic president that was met with astonishment and shock from immigrant advocates who have said his policies do not reflect the progressive approach they had expected.

“Voters want to see our elected leaders do the hard work to fix our frayed immigration system,” said Deirdre Schifeling, chief political



ARTIE WALKER JR./AP

President Joe Biden speaks at the First in the Nation Celebration held by the South Carolina Democratic Party, Saturday, in Columbia, S.C. Biden offered fresh assurances Saturday night that he would be willing to close the U.S.-Mexico border if lawmakers would only send him a bill to sign.

and advocacy officer at the American Civil Liberties Union. “President Biden and Congress must abandon these proposals and heed voters’ demands for fair and effective immigration policies that manage the border and treat people seeking safety with dignity.”

But Biden is struggling across multiple fronts, dealing with an influx of asylum seekers even as he cracks down on those who cross into the U.S. illegally. Democrats are increasingly frustrated because asylum seekers are streaming into cities that lack the resources to care for them.

In a letter Saturday responding to Biden’s comments, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., in-

sisted that Biden doesn’t need congressional action to close the border and called on him to “take executive action immediately to reverse the catastrophe he has created.”

Immigration remains a major concern for voters in the 2024 election. An AP-NORC poll earlier this month found that those voicing concerns about immigration climbed to 35% from 27% last year. Most Republicans, 55%, say the government needs to focus on immigration in 2024, while 22% of Democrats listed immigration as a priority. That’s up from 45% and 14%, respectively, in December 2022.

Arrests for illegal border cross-

ings from Mexico reached an all-time high in December since monthly numbers have been released.

The Border Patrol tallied 249,785 arrests on the Mexican border in December, up 31% from 191,112 in November and up 13% from 222,018 in December 2022, the previous all-time high.

Mexicans accounted for 56,236 arrests in December, while Venezuelans were second with 46,937, erasing much of the decline that followed the start of deportation flights to Venezuela in October. Arrests of Guatemalans surged, with Hondurans and Colombians rounding out the top five nationalities.

## Colombian man pleads guilty to kidnapping 2 US soldiers

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Colombian national pleaded guilty Friday in U.S. federal court for his role in drugging, kidnapping and assaulting two American soldiers who were on temporary assignment to Bogota, Colombia.

Jefferson Arango Castellanos, 36, and two other Colombian nationals targeted the soldiers on March 5, 2020, while they were at a bar in Zona T, an upscale entertainment district, according to court documents. The two soldiers, who are not named in the documents, went to the bar to watch soccer and dance.

Kenny Julieth Uribe Chiran and Pedro Jose Silva Ochoa were also

indicted in the incident, according to court documents. However, the documents do not show whether Uribe or Silva have been extradited and no attorneys are listed for them.

At the bar, Arango and Uribe put tranquilizers in the soldiers’ drinks while Silva waited outside with a car. The trio then kidnapped the soldiers and took their wallets, debit cards, credit cards and cell-phones. Arango then used the cards to make purchases and withdraw cash.

The two soldiers lost consciousness during the ordeal, according to court documents. Their absence was immediately noted because they did not show up for work the next day.

One soldier was found in the afternoon in his apartment but could not remember how he got there. A woman called police when she saw the other soldier struggling to walk and falling in the street on the morning of March 6.

Police took him to a clinic, and he later took a taxi back to his apartment where a member of the U.S. Embassy’s security detail was waiting for him, according to court documents.

A toxicology screening at a local hospital confirmed the soldiers, who had bruises and abrasions, were drugged with benzodiazepines, which are tranquilizers.

Colombian National Police and the FBI worked jointly on the inves-

tigation and used surveillance footage from the bar and ATMs and stores where the cards were used. The soldiers were seen on video being escorted out of the bar after 2 a.m. and into a waiting car.

Colombian police then began intercepting calls on Arango’s phone. They heard Arango, Uribe and Silva discuss the events as a common scheme among them but that the coronavirus pandemic had slowed their efforts.

Arango and Uribe were arrested in Colombia in December 2020 on charges unrelated to the soldiers but for similar actions, according to court documents. An FBI agent then interviewed Arango, who admitted to drugging and robbing the

soldiers.

In May, Arango was extradited to the U.S., where his case is with the Southern District of Florida. He pleaded guilty to kidnapping an internationally protected person, conspiracy to kidnap an internationally protected person, assaulting an internationally protected person and conspiracy to assault an internationally protected person. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

The Justice Department did not immediately respond to questions about the standing of the other two suspects.

## NATION

# COVID-era business program awash in fraud

## Congress aims to wind down employment measure and instead expand child tax credit

By KEVIN FREKING  
AND FATIMA HUSSEIN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel met privately with senators recently, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee asked for his assessment of a startling report: A whistleblower estimated that 95% of claims now being made by businesses for a COVID-era tax break were fraudulent.

“He looked at his shoes and he basically said, ‘Yeah,’” recalled the lawmaker who posed that question, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

The answer explains why Congress is racing to wind down what is known as the employee retention tax credit. Congress established the program during the coronavirus pandemic as an incentive for businesses to keep workers on the payroll.

Demand for the credit soared as Congress extended the tax break and made it available to more companies. Aggressive marketers dangled the prospect of enormous refunds to business owners if they

would just apply. As a result, what was expected to cost the federal government \$55 billion has instead ballooned to nearly five times that amount as of July. Meanwhile, new claims are still pouring into the IRS each week, ensuring a growing price tag that lawmakers are anxious to cap.

Lawmakers across the political spectrum who rarely agree on little else — from liberal Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., to conservative Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis. — agree it’s time to close down the program.

“I don’t have the exact number, but it’s like almost universal fraud in the program. It should be ended,” Johnson said. “I don’t see how anybody could support it.”

Warren added: “The standards were too loose and the oversight was too thin.”

The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that winding down the program more quickly and increasing penalties for those companies promoting improper claims would generate about \$79 billion over 10 years. Lawmakers aim to use the savings to offset the cost of three

business tax breaks and a more generous child tax credit for many low-income families. Households benefiting from the changes in the child tax credit would see an average tax cut of \$680 in the first year, according to an estimate from the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center.

That tax credit is \$2,000 per child, but only \$1,600 is refundable, which makes it available to parents who owe little to nothing in federal income taxes. An agreement reached earlier this month by congressional tax-writers would increase the maximum refundable child tax credit to \$1,800 for 2023 tax returns, \$1,900 for the following year and \$2,000 for 2025 tax returns. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank and advocacy group, projected that about 16 million children in low-income families would benefit from the child tax credit expansion.

The package was overwhelmingly approved by a House committee this month, 40-3, showing it has broad, bipartisan support.

But passage through Congress is not assured because many key sen-

ators have concerns about aspects of the bill.

When Congress created the tax break for employers at the pandemic’s onset, it proved so popular that lawmakers extended and amended the program three times. The credit, worth up to \$26,000 per employee, can be claimed on wages paid through 2021.

To qualify, generally businesses must show that a local or state government order related to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in their business having to close or partially suspend operations. Or the businesses must show they experienced a significant decline in revenues.

Larry Gray, a certified public accountant from Rolla, Mo., said he had concerns early on about how the program could be abused.

“There was no documentation really to speak” and the IRS just sent out the checks, Gray said. “They just started printing the checks and I believe Congress was wanting them to print the checks.”

His hunch has proven correct, judging by the filings that he has reviewed. Generally, he said, the busi-

nesses that don’t qualify are failing to cite the government order that resulted in their closure or partial suspension. They are also routinely citing reasons for reimbursement that don’t meet the program’s criteria.

The IRS paused accepting claims for the tax credit in September last year, until 2024 due to rising concerns that an influx of applications are fraudulent. At that point, it had received 3.6 million claims.

In an update issued Thursday about the program, the IRS said that it has thousands of audits in the pipeline and that as of Dec. 31, it has initiated 352 criminal investigations involving more than \$2.9 billion in potentially fraudulent claims.

Werfel briefed the Senate Finance Committee recently on the measures that have been put into place to address the fraud, including developing a special withdrawal program for those with unprocessed claims and a voluntary disclosure program for those who believed they were improperly paid. Since then, the IRS has seen an immediate 40% decline in average weekly claims, he said.

# Trump is on the hook for \$88.3M. What happens next?

By DAVID B. CARUSO  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — For years, Donald Trump hurled insults at E. Jean Carroll, saying the advice columnist fabricated a sexual assault allegation against him to sell a book.

Will Trump keep that up, now that he’s been hit with a \$83.3 million defamation judgment?

A jury on Friday found that Trump had maliciously damaged Carroll’s reputation in 2019 after she went public with her accusations. Jurors awarded her \$18 million to compensate for the personal harm she experienced, then added \$65 million more to punish Trump — and maybe prevent him from continuing to go after her on social media.

A different jury concluded last May that Trump was responsible for sexually abusing Carroll in a Manhattan department store dressing room in 1996. Those jurors awarded Carroll \$5 million. If both judgments stand, Trump would owe her a total of \$88.3 million. Trump and his lawyers have promised to appeal.

A look at the verdict and where the case might go from here:

## The accusation

Carroll said she was shopping at the Bergdorf Goodman store on Fifth Avenue in 1996 when she bumped into Trump, who lived nearby. She said they recognized each other. At the time, Carroll had a

column in Elle magazine and was the host of a cable TV talk show.

In court testimony and in her memoir, Carroll said she and Trump went to the store’s lingerie section and then into a dressing room as each tried to persuade the other to try on a lacy item. When they moved into the dressing room, she said, Trump pushed her into a wall, pulled down her tights and sexually assaulted her. Carroll said she broke free and ran.

After she wrote about the alleged encounter in 2019, Trump, who by then had been elected president, told reporters he had no idea who Carroll was, that her accusation was “totally false” and that she was motivated by a desire to sell books.

## The first trial

Carroll sued Trump for defamation in 2019, saying his statements about her were false and damaged her reputation. That claim wound up being bogged down for years over the legal question of whether, in denying the allegations, Trump had been fulfilling his duties as president. Trump claimed that the presidency shielded him from liability against the defamation lawsuit.

In the meantime, New York changed its law to give sexual abuse survivors a fresh chance to sue civilly over attacks that happened in the distant past. Carroll was one of the first people to take advantage, filing a new legal claim against Trump alleging that he had raped her. She al-

so sued over things he had said about her after leaving the White House.

Trump was not criminally charged. The civil verdict, however, has led many to mistakenly believe he was convicted of sexually assaulting Carroll. Under state law, too much time had passed since the alleged assault in 1996 for a criminal case to be considered against Trump.

A jury heard testimony in that lawsuit last year and found that while Carroll had not proved she had been raped, under New York’s definition of that crime, Trump had sexually abused her.

The jury awarded Carroll \$2 million for the abuse and nearly \$3 million for Trump’s public comments about her, which it said were defamatory — and therefore not protected free speech.

## The second trial

With the main legal issues resolved, one matter remained: Had Carroll also been damaged by Trump’s comments while he was still in the White House.

U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan ruled that there would need to be a new trial to decide that claim, but that trial did not need to revisit the issue of whether Trump had assaulted Carroll or whether the things he had said about her were defamatory. This trial would decide how much more, if anything, Trump owed Carroll for things he had said about her on June 21-22, 2019.



YUKI IWAMURA/AP

**E. Jean Carroll, center, leaves court Friday in New York. Juries have awarded her \$83.3 million.**



EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ/AP

**Former President Donald Trump speaks after exiting the courtroom on a break last month.**

Trump and his lawyers have been outraged that they did not get a chance to make a new argument that he was innocent, but Kaplan said they had already lost that fight.

## What’s next?

Trump’s legal team is appealing the verdict in the first case and has promised an appeal of the second one, too.

“It will not deter us. We will keep fighting. And I assure you, we didn’t win today, but we will win,” said Trump’s lawyer, Alina Habba.

Among other things, his team wants higher courts to rule that Trump was within his rights to forcefully deny Carroll’s allegations and suggest she had ulterior motives. Trump’s lawyers also are contesting Kaplan’s ruling that the jury in the second trial did not need to revisit whether Trump was liable for

sexual assault, and that the judge unfairly limited what Trump’s lawyers could say in front of the jury.

Appeals will go to a panel of judges in New York. The appeals eventually could reach the U.S. Supreme Court for the justices to consider.

## If new comments come?

Carroll could bring a new lawsuit over each new comment. Potentially, new trials would have to be held at which jurors could pile on additional damages.

Trump might have the financial resources to pay a huge judgment. He reported having about \$294 million in cash or cash equivalents on his most recent annual financial statement, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. That’s in addition to the value of his real estate assets, which Trump has claimed are worth billions of dollars.

## NATION



TAMIR KALIFA/For The Washington Post

A memorial honoring those killed in the Aug. 8 fires and those missing is seen in Lahaina on Aug. 29.

## Maui police identify the 100th, last known, victim of the Lahaina fires

By VICTORIA BISSETT  
The Washington Post

Police on Maui have identified the 100th and final known victim of the blaze that swept through Lahaina in August.

In a statement Friday, Maui county and police department said they had identified Lydia Coloma, 70, and informed her next of kin.

"It is with a heavy heart that the County of Maui and the Maui Police Department confirm the following identity of a victim involved in the West Maui Wildfire incident," the statement said. "Our hearts go out to the families, friends, and community affected by this devastating event."

According to The Associated Press, police said they identified Coloma based on the location of the remains, rather than through DNA or other positive identification methods.

Coloma, who was Filipina and lived in Lahaina, was the ninth member of her family to be confirmed dead, the Honolulu Civil Beat reported.

Coloma's sister-in-law, Tina Acosta, said she did not know why

identification had taken so long, telling the AP: "We were waiting."

The scale and intensity of the fire has made identifying victims, or even confirming the number of people killed, extremely difficult.

"The remains we are finding are through a fire that melted metal," Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said in the days after the blaze, as he asked for the public's patience while DNA tests were conducted on human remains.

Officials revised the confirmed death toll from 115 to 97 in mid-September following more precise testing that revealed some body bags contained human remains belonging to the same people.

The figure rose slightly over the following month as some people died of their injuries or police discovered further remains, according to the AP.

The latest estimated death toll is 100, with all 100 individuals identified and their families notified, Maui county said in its Friday statement.

At one point after the fire, almost 400 people were reported missing or unaccounted for fol-

lowing the disaster.

However, that number went down as individuals were located alive, or their remains were identified.

Now, just three people remain on the list of people unaccounted for, according to police: Paul Kasprzycki, Robert H. Owens and Elmer Lee Stevens.

The wildfire on Maui — believed to have been sparked at least in part by fallen power lines and spread by high winds and months of drought — razed the historic city of Lahaina on Aug. 8.

Several months later, the community still needs to rebuild, and faces difficult challenges — including a housing shortage for survivors, and disagreement over where to dump the toxic ash and debris from the disaster.

Last week, The Post reported, survivors from the city gathered together to mourn, in an event known as the Lahaina Unity Gathering. Thousands marched along a four-mile route and congregated at a beach park, where they shared stories, sang, danced and chanted for those who had died in the fire.

## Boeing jetliners in the air again after side panel blowout

Associated Press

Alaska Airlines has begun flying Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners again since they were grounded after a panel blew out of the side of one of the airline's planes.

The airline said in a statement that it has completed its final inspection of their group of the aircraft. They said they resumed flying the Max 9 with a flight from Seattle to San Diego on Friday afternoon.

On Wednesday, the Federal Aviation Administration approved the inspection and maintenance process to return the planes to flying. Technicians at Alaska began inspections that night, the airline said.

The airline said they expect inspections to be completed by the end of next week, allowing the airline to operate a full flight schedule. Inspections are expected to take up to 12 hours per aircraft.

"Each of our 737-9 MAX will return to service only after the rigorous inspections are completed and each plane is deemed airworthy according to FAA requirements," the airline said in a written statement Friday.

The first United passenger flight on a Boeing MAX 9 since the panel blew out on the Alaska Airlines flight departed from Newark, N.J., to Las Vegas Saturday morning. The flight carried 175 passengers and six crew members.

Boeing Commercial Airplanes president and CEO Stan Deal said in a message to Boeing employees Friday that the company's most immediate goal is to help airlines restore operations.

"Our long-term focus is on improving our quality so that we can regain the confidence of our customers, our regulator and the flying public," he wrote.



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

A door plug area of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9, with panels removed, is shown at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in Washington.

"Frankly, we have disappointed and let them down. We are deeply sorry for the significant disruption and frustration for our customers, some of whom have been publicly and unfairly criticized," he added.

The Federal Aviation Administration has detailed the process that airlines must follow to inspect — and if necessary, repair — the panels called door plugs, one of which broke loose on Alaska Airlines flight 1282 on Jan. 5.

The plugs are used to seal holes left for extra doors on the Max 9 when an unusually high number of seats requires more exits for safety reasons.

Alaska Airlines grounded all 65 of its Max 9 jets within hours after one of the two door plugs in the back half of the cabin of flight 1282 blew away while 16,000 feet above Oregon. The FAA grounded all Max 9s in the U.S. the day after the blowout.

No passengers were seriously injured.

## Bayer ordered to pay \$2.25B after jury links herbicide to cancer

By FRANCES VINALL  
The Washington Post

A jury handed down a \$2.25 billion verdict, including \$2 billion in punitive damages, against agrochemical giant Monsanto, according to the lawyers of a man who said he developed cancer from using the company's weed killer, Roundup.

John McKivison, 49, filed a lawsuit in Philadelphia against the company after he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which he said was due to

using Roundup on his property for 20 years.

On Friday a jury returned a unanimous verdict, finding that Roundup was a cancer-causing product, that Monsanto was negligent and that Monsanto failed to warn about the dangers of Roundup, McKivison's lawyers Tom Kline and Jason Itkin said in a joint statement.

"The jury's punitive damages award sends a clear message that this multi-national corporation needs top to bottom change,"

they said, calling the verdict "a condemnation of 50 years of misconduct by Monsanto."

In an emailed statement, Bayer, Monsanto's parent company, said it planned to appeal the verdict and what it called the "unconstitutionally excessive" damages. It said the jury's verdict "conflicts with the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence and worldwide regulatory and scientific assessments" on Roundup.

The claims rest on the ingre-

dient glyphosate, introduced as a herbicide by Monsanto in 1974, which inhibits a certain enzyme in most plants, preventing them from growing. Monsanto also introduced genetically modified crops that are resistant to glyphosate.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found in 2020 that "there are no risks of concern to human health when glyphosate is used in accordance with its current label" and that "glyphosate is unlikely to be a

human carcinogen."

The European Commission said last year that "based on an assessment of all available information, there is currently no evidence to classify glyphosate as being carcinogenic." Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency has approved its use.

But the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer found in 2015 that glyphosate is "probably carcinogenic to humans."



# WORLD

## Climate activists throw soup at glass protecting Mona Lisa

Associated Press

PARIS — Two climate activists hurled soup Sunday at the glass protecting the Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum in Paris and shouted slogans advocating for a sustainable food system. This came amid protests by French farmers against several issues, including low wages.

In a video posted on social media, two women with the words "FOOD RIPOSTE" written on their T-shirts could be seen passing under a security barrier to get closer to the painting and throwing soup at the glass protecting Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece.

"What's the most important thing?" they shouted. "Art, or right to a healthy and sustainable food?"

"Our farming system is sick. Our farmers are dying at work," they added.

The Louvre employees could then be seen putting black panels in front of the Mona Lisa and asking visitors to evacuate the room.

Paris police said two people were arrested following the incident. On its website, the "Food Riposte" group said the French government is breaking its climate commitments and called for the equivalent of the country's state-sponsored health care system to be put in place to give people better access to healthy food while providing farmers a decent income.

Angry French farmers have been using their tractors for days to set up road blockades and slow traffic across France to seek better remuneration for their produce, less red tape and protection against cheap imports. They also dumped stinky agricultural waste



CLEMENT LANOT/AP

In this scene grab, activists react after throwing soup at the glass protecting the Mona Lisa, at the Louvre Museum, Paris, on Sunday.

at the gates of government offices.

On Friday, the government announced a series of measures that farmers said do not fully address their demands. Those include "drastically simplifying" certain technical procedures and the progressive end to diesel fuel taxes for farm vehicles.

Some farmers threatened to converge on Paris, starting Monday, to block the main roads leading to the capital.

New Prime Minister Gabriel Attal visited a farm on Sunday in the central region of Indre-et-

Loire. He acknowledged farmers are in a difficult position because "on the one side we say 'we need quality' and on the other side 'we want ever-lower prices'."

"What's at stake is finding solutions in the short, middle and long term," he said, "because we need our farmers."

Attal also said his government is considering "additional" measures against what he called "unfair competition" from other countries that have different production rules and are importing food to France.

## 3 nations leave African economic bloc

Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria — Three West African nations of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have withdrawn from the regional economic bloc known as ECOWAS, their respective juntas announced Sunday, accusing the bloc of "inhumane" sanctions to reverse the coups in their nations.

The juntas said in a joint statement read on state television that they have "decided in complete sovereignty on the immediate withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), alleging that the bloc has "moved away from the ideals of its founding fathers and pan-Africanism" after nearly 50 years of its establishment.

"Furthermore, ECOWAS, under the influence of foreign powers, betraying its founding principles, has become a threat to its member states and its populations whose happiness it is supposed to ensure," their statements read.

STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>  
**SERVICE DIRECTORY**  
 The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation

944

### VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service
- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

For Further Information Please Contact

Phone:	GERMANY +49-(0)6134-2592730	UNITED KINGDOM +44-(0)1638-515714	U.S.A. +1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701
Toll-free:	0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)		+1-800-264-8167 (US only)
E-Mail:	info@transglobal-logistics.de	enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk	info@tgal.us
WEB:	www.transglobal-logistics.de	www.carshipuk.co.uk	www.tgal.us

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations

Trans Global  
LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH

### Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES

Transportation

944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA



OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri  
0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de  
Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

### Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!



Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## YouTuber charged with torturing animals

**PA** UPPER DARBY — A southeastern Pennsylvania woman is facing multiple counts of aggravated animal cruelty after allegedly filming herself torturing and killing animals — and uploading the videos to her YouTube channel.

Authorities have accused Anigar Monsee, 28, of producing and disturbing at least four videos involving the killing of frogs, a rabbit, a pigeon, and a chicken. She was charged with four felony counts of aggravated cruelty to animals, local television station WPVI reported.

The YouTuber began sharing the videos last year, according to the Upper Darby Police Department.

According to investigators, Monsee would request “likes” and engage with YouTube viewers before she began torturing an animal. Some of the comments were sexually charged, NBC Philadelphia reported, citing an affidavit filed for her arrest.

## Dancer with allergy dies from eating cookies

**CT** HARTFORD — A 25-year-old professional dancer from England who moved to New York City to pursue her career has died after eating a mislabeled cookie containing peanuts, part of a batch that has since been recalled.

The grocery retailer Stew Leonard's announced Tuesday that Vanilla Florentine Cookies sold in its stores in Danbury and Newington in Connecticut from Nov. 6 to Dec. 31 were being recalled in partnership with the Food and Drug Administration. The company said about 500 packages of the holiday cookies were sold.

The person who died was identified as Órla Baxendale, a law firm representing her interests said Thursday. She died Jan. 11 after suffering anaphylactic shock resulting from a severe allergic reaction, according to a post on the website for Gair, Gair, Conason, Rubinowitz, Bloom, Hershenhorn, Steigman & Mackauf.

## Every snowplow deserves a name in frigid state

**MN** ST. PAUL — Snowplows are essential to enduring winter in Minnesota, so maybe it's not surprising that every year thousands of people vote on names for the giant machines that clear the state's roads, such as Plowy McPlowFace and Darth Blader.

The often-icy state began naming its 800 plows in 2020 and is expected to announce winners of its 2023-2024 Name a Snowplow contest this week, adding eight selections to more than three dozen names that already grace trucks scraping snow off Minnesota highways.



SARAH GORDON, THE DAY (NEW LONDON, CONN.)/AP

## Steeple collapse

**Emergency crews respond to the former First Congregational church after the steeple of the old, historic church collapsed Thursday in New London, Conn. No deaths or injuries were reported in the collapse. The fire department found one woman at the building when it initially responded, but she was escorted out and is safe.**

Besides Plowy McPlowFace and Darth Blader, winners over the years include Blizzard of Oz, Scoop Dogg and Han Snolo. Top names often have Minnesota connections. F. Salt Fitzgerald was a nod to St. Paul-born author F. Scott Fitzgerald, while The Truck Formerly Known As Plow recognized musician Prince, who for a time famously declined to be recognized by a spoken name.

## Lawmakers to make community college free

**MI** LANSING — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer urged state lawmakers to pass legislation that would provide free community college tuition for all high school graduates during her sixth State of the State speech last week.

Whitmer also prioritized community college access in her annual address last year. State lawmakers responded by temporarily lowering the minimum age for free tuition from 25 to 21 years old. The Democratic governor now wants to expand the program by removing age requirements for free community college, her office said.

Whitmer's administration created the Michigan Reconnect program in 2021, aiming to increase the percentage of the state's workforce with a postsecondary degree or training from 50.5% to 60% by 2030.

It made Michigan residents 25

years and older eligible for free community college tuition.

## NASA's little helicopter on Mars logs last flight

**FL** CAPE CANAVERAL — NASA's little Mars helicopter has flown its last flight.

The space agency announced Thursday that the 4-pound chopper named Ingenuity can no longer fly because of rotor blade damage. While it remains upright and in contact with flight controllers, its \$85 million mission is officially over, officials said.

Originally intended as a short-term tech demo, Ingenuity logged 72 flights over three years at Mars. It accumulated more than two hours of flight time, traveling 11 miles.

That's more than 14 times farther than planned, according to NASA. It soared as high as 79 feet and hit speeds of up to 22.4 mph.

## Whales to be protected around wind farms

**NJ** ATLANTIC CITY — Two federal environmental agencies issued plans last week to better protect endangered whales amid offshore wind farm development.

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released plans to protect endangered North American right whales, of which there are only

about 360 left in the world.

The strategy will use artificial intelligence and passive acoustic monitoring to determine where the whales are at a given time and to monitor the impacts of wind development on the animals.

It also calls for avoiding the granting of offshore wind leases in areas where major impacts to right whales may occur; establishing noise limits during construction; supporting research to develop new harm minimization technologies; and making it a priority to develop quieter technology and operating methods for offshore wind development.

## Blast of cold lets gators show off a special skill

**NC** OCEAN ISLE BEACH — The recent cold weather has given alligators a chance to show off their way of coping with freezing temperatures.

The Swamp Park Outdoor Adventure Center in Ocean Isle Beach recently posted eerie videos on social media on Sunday showing alligators suspended in frozen ponds with just the tips of their snouts peeking above the ice.

In one video, Assistant Manager Scott Perry got up close with one of the “swamp puppies” in their frozen state, reaching out to “boop” one motionless alligator's nose, while warning viewers, “Don't do this at home.”

The cold-blooded animals can't

regulate their own temperature, so when temperatures drop they go into a state called brumation to survive.

## Biker tops 150 mph while filming for social media

**CO** DENVER — A motorcyclist who authorities say posted a video of himself on YouTube speeding from Colorado Springs to the Denver metro area on Interstate 25 in 20 minutes — a trip that typically takes about an hour — is wanted on multiple charges.

Rendon Dietzmann, 32, of Texas, recorded himself Sept. 28 going more than 150 mph, squeezing through small gaps in traffic and traveling on the shoulder, according to a Colorado State Patrol news release sent Wednesday.

The video has since been deleted from YouTube, but the State Patrol shared a clip with the news release.

Dietzmann, who is known as Gixxer Brah on YouTube, has posted multiple similar videos from different parts of the country.

He is wanted on charges of menacing, engaging in a speed contest, reckless endangerment, reckless driving, speeding 40 mph over the limit, engaging in an exhibition of speed and driving without license plates attached.

## FACES

# Happy to share starry limelight

Nicole Kidman's character not the central focus of Hong Kong-set Amazon Prime series 'Expats'

By ALICIA RANCILIO  
Associated Press

Nicole Kidman captivated TV viewers in 2020 in "The Undoing," as a woman whose husband was accused of murder. In "Big Little Lies," she was a woman in an abusive marriage. And let's not forget she won an Oscar for playing 20th century writer Virginia Woolf, who battled mental illness, in the 2002 movie "The Hours."

In her new series "Expats," premiering Friday on Amazon Prime Video, Kidman once again emotionally jumps off a cliff. At the center of "Expats" are three women, played by Kidman, Ji-young Yoo and Sarayu Blue, who are each expatriates living in Hong Kong. Their lives are all altered when the young son of Kidman's character, Margaret, goes missing.

**"Imagine you've just met Nicole Kidman and you're like, 'Hey, I've got this idea for an episode and you're in the background. What do you think about it?'"**

Lulu Wang ("The Farewell") directed and was the showrunner of the six-episode series, filmed on location in Hong Kong.

"When Nicole came to me, to make the series, I just felt like she was meeting me at the height of the success of 'The Farewell.' But

people who know me from childhood know we were immigrants (from China)," Wang says. "I felt like the series had to represent that aspect of my life, like, yes, I'm an American expat in certain contexts, but in another context, I'm a Chinese immigrant. I wanted to really challenge this idea of a bubble that expats have."

Lulu Wang  
"Expats" director and showrunner

An idea that Wang had was to make the fifth episode some 90 minutes and focus on the domestic workers, expats themselves and tasked with keeping other women's households running.

"Imagine you've just met Nicole



PRIME VIDEO/AP

Brian Tee, foreground, and Nicole Kidman play spouses living in Hong Kong in "Expats."

Kidman and you're like, 'Hey, I've got this idea for an episode and you're in the background. What do you think about it?'" Wang laughs.

An executive producer, Kidman wasn't just receptive to Wang's thoughts and ideas — they spoke to a true career passion, championing others.

"What I want to do at this point in my life and career is support women like this and support the new visionaries and auteurs that are coming up and try to create paths for them," Kidman says.

"I had never worked with a writer's room before," Wang says. "It's a very sort of solitary task to write usually. Here it was a room of women, helping to develop the story."

One of those writers was Janice Y. K. Lee, whose novel "The Expatriates" inspired the series.

"She was so not precious about the book. And the reason, honestly, I wanted her in the room was so that we couldn't mess things up and so that she would be involved in the process," Wang explains. "You can't get better research than having the person who experienced it and wrote it in the room. ... We would always reference the book and quote it back to her, and she was always quite embarrassed."

In addition to the women in front of and behind the camera, Kidman is happy to share her spotlight with Brian Tee, who plays her husband.

"I'm so happy he's gotten the chance to do this and to act opposite him," she says, adding that, as on-screen spouses, they were bonded by trauma.

"We really helped each other. We were very much each other's best friend and support system. And because we're playing a married couple whose child is missing, we're doing that together," she says.

To go to those emotional places as Margaret "was harrowing at times," admits Kidman, who says she had to lose herself in the moment. "It's an exploration. ... It's like, put me in the place, put me in the scene, and let's go off to the objective and whatever comes through will come through."

## George Carlin estate sues over fake comedy special

By ANDREW DALTON  
Associated Press

The estate of George Carlin is suing the media company behind a fake hourlong comedy special that purportedly uses artificial intelligence to re-create the late stand-up comic's style and material.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in Los Angeles on Jan. 25 asks that a judge order the podcast outlet Dudesy to immediately take down the audio special, "George Carlin: I'm Glad I'm Dead," in which a synthesis of Carlin delivers commentary on current events. Carlin died in 2008.

Carlin's daughter, Kelly Carlin, said in a statement that the work is "a poorly-executed facsimile cobbled together by unscrupulous individuals to capitalize on the extraordinary goodwill my father established with his adoring fanbase."

The Carlin estate and its executor, Jerold Hamza, are named as plaintiffs in the suit, which alleges violations of Carlin's right of

publicity and copyright. The named defendants are Dudesy and podcast hosts Will Sasso and Chad Kultgen.

"None of the Defendants had permission to use Carlin's likeness for the AI-generated 'George Carlin Special,' nor did they have a license to use any of the late comedian's copyrighted materials," the lawsuit says.

The defendants have not filed a response to the lawsuit and it was not clear whether they have retained an attorney. They could not immediately be reached for comment.

At the beginning of the special posted on YouTube on Jan. 9, a voiceover identifying itself as the AI engine used by Dudesy says it listened to the comic's 50 years of material and "did my best to imitate his voice, cadence and attitude as well as the subject matter I think would have interested him today."

The plaintiffs say if that was in fact how it was created — and some listeners have doubted its stated origins — it means Car-

lin's copyright was violated.

The company, as it often does on similar projects, also released a podcast episode with Sasso and Kultgen introducing and commenting on the mock Carlin.

"What we just listened to, was that passable?" Kultgen says in a section of the episode cited in the lawsuit.

"Yeah, that sounded exactly like George Carlin," Sasso responds.

The lawsuit is among the first in what is likely to be an increasing number of major legal moves made to fight the regenerated use of celebrity images and likenesses.

The AI issue was a major sticking point in the resolution of last year's Hollywood writers and actors strikes.

Josh Schiller, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said in a statement that the "case is not just about AI, it's about the humans that use AI to violate the law, infringe on intellectual property rights, and flout common decency."



AP

Actor and comedian George Carlin poses in New York in 2004. Carlin died in 2008.

## STARS AND STRIPES

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher  
 Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer  
 Lt. Col. Katie R. Fidler, Europe commander  
 John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff  
 Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Pacific commander  
 Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

## EDITORIAL

Robert H. Reid, Editor in Chief  
 reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation  
 moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor  
 pinson.ann@stripes.com

## BUREAU STAFF

## Europe/Mideast

Erik Slaviv, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief  
 slaviv.erik@stripes.com  
 +49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

## Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief  
 kidd.aaron@stripes.com  
 +81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

## Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief  
 cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com  
 (+1)(202)886-0033

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

## CIRCULATION

## Mideast

David Schultz, District Manager  
 schultz.david@stripes.com  
 xsscirculation@stripes.com  
 +49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

## Europe

Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager  
 aquino.carlo@stripes.com  
 memberservices@stripes.com  
 +49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

## Pacific

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

## CONTACT US

## Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003  
 633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

## Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

## Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

## OMBUDSMAN

Jacqueline Smith

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at [ombudsman@stripes.com](mailto:ombudsman@stripes.com), or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2024

**stripes.com**

## OPINION

## The anti-Houthi campaign is doomed to failure

BY GEOFF LAMEAR

Special to Stars and Stripes

The United States has already committed to a monthslong campaign to force an end to Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, continuing to conduct attacks to degrade the Houthis' missile arsenal. This exercise in futility will not deliver its desired end and will instead make attacks like those in Iraq last week more likely. Though no American service members were fatalities in the most recent attack, the overwhelming force and resultant injuries portend a cycle of escalation where this possibility becomes an inevitability.

The United States has to look at its options to secure shipping in the Red Sea. This means changing either the Houthis' strategic calculus or their ability to attack shipping. In practice, nine years of Saudi bombings against the Houthis shows that the latter cannot be accomplished.

Whether through disbursement, camouflage or replacement, the Houthis' missile arsenal is redundant and unlikely to be bombed into irrelevance. Precision bombs did not help the Saudis then, and they won't help Washington now.

American decisionmakers have fallen prey to hubris in the application of airpower. While the United States boasts the best weapon systems, these tactical advantages do not translate into strategic ends. The idea of effects-based operations posits that sufficient destruction will trigger effects which disrupt the enemy's freedom of action. But

the Houthis do not have a center of gravity that can be knocked out with a shock and awe campaign from the air. Their weapons will remain hard to locate, and their base of support will likely rally in the face of U.S. attacks.

The Houthis' will is also unlikely to break. Deterrence is the wrong framing for changing the Houthis' behavior. The Houthis have already established a new status quo. Changing that requires compellence, as Thomas Shelling coined it. The Houthis have already seen that their Red Sea attacks invite attacks, and continue nonetheless. The United States persisting in further strikes won't magically create leverage where there is none.

The United States should instead focus on what it can influence: the Houthis' decision calculus. The Houthis may be resistant to bombs, but they're not immune to incentives. The Houthis' motives are clearly stated, and they will fight until there is an end to Israel's war. Washington's expenditure of munitions won't change that.

To eliminate the Houthis' incentives to attack shipping, the United States can suspend its offensive support for Israel's war. This would also discourage further entanglement against Iran's proxies in Iraq and Syria. This doesn't translate to making Israel vulnerable either. The JDAM kits, tens of thousands of precision bombs and artillery shells, and tens of thousands of tank shells do not make Israel safer. To the contrary, as U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin noted in December, Israel's conduct of the war is courting a stra-

tegic defeat.

The simultaneous escalation in Yemen and Iraq is indicative of a larger spiral that the United States needs to avoid: war with Iran. As shown this month, Patriot missiles can be overwhelmed with saturation attacks. This was achieved with less than two dozen missiles; large-scale conflict would inevitably mean thousands of U.S. troops caught in the range of thousands of Iranian missiles. The scale of destruction would be unthinkable, and the economic and military effects would dwarf any minor nuisance occurring in the Red Sea. The cost-benefit ratio does not justify this risk. Already, shippers have rerouted container ships to avoid this risk altogether. Washington is risking all-out war, thousands of American lives, and a fifth of the world's oil supply to protect phantom shipping lanes in the Red Sea.

The United States needs to acknowledge realities. The Houthis cannot be bombed into compliance, but they might respond to a change in the costs and benefits. The United States can discourage further Houthi attacks by dampening American support to Israel's ongoing offensive. At the same time, the United States can withdraw troops from their most vulnerable positions, namely Iraq and Syria. Doing so provides Iranian proxies with fewer targets and decreases the probability of an Iran-U.S. conflict. The same strategy won't yield different results, but a different strategy just might.

Geoff LaMear is a Fellow at Defense Priorities.

## Ukraine and the myth of a permanent all-volunteer force

BY ANDREW SPAFFORD

Special to Stars and Stripes

When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, many heralded a new era of warfare. Short wars waged by small professional forces seemed to be the way of the future. Authoritarian actors, it was argued, could use the Crimean fait accompli as a blueprint to undermine Western military dominance by disguising aggression and denying the United States time to respond. Nine years later, Russia's war with Ukraine has exposed the flaws in this prediction. A Crimea-style "special military operation" designed to swallow up all of Ukraine in one swift action has devolved into a slog with no end in sight and hundreds of thousands of lives lost.

As the two countries scramble to fill their depleted ranks, it has become painfully clear how unprepared both sides were for a lengthy conflict. In Ukraine, stories abound of recruiters raiding gyms and shopping centers to drum up recruits. Many men who were officially disqualified from service are now being drafted while healthy men flee the country or bribe officials to escape service. Some videos have even surfaced online allegedly showing Ukrainian recruiters physically stuffing men into vans bound for recruitment offices. Such desperation is a far cry from the beginning of the war when Ukrainian men flooded into recruitment stations to serve their country.

Even Russia, a country with three times the population of Ukraine, has had to take drastic measures to meet its manpower needs. Despite a massive advertising campaign and enticing financial incentives, Moscow is struggling to find volunteers. The draft, meanwhile, is deeply unpopular, especially as Russia's outdated conscription system has

struggled to efficiently prepare men for service. With the Russian presidential election mere months away and the Wagner mutiny still fresh in his mind, President Vladimir Putin will want to avoid another mobilization that could lead to further domestic unrest. Instead, Moscow has recruited prisoners, forced men in its occupied Ukrainian territories to fight, and offered expedited citizenship to foreigners who volunteer for service.

Such harsh recruitment tactics seem draconian in the United States where the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) has supposedly relegated conscription to the trash heap of history. The Russo-Ukrainian War, however, shows that this assumption is dangerously flawed. In its 50-year history, the AVF has never suffered casualties that even approach those of this conflict.

Ukraine has suffered around 180,000 casualties while Russia has lost roughly 90% of its prewar army all in less than two years of war. Compare that with the U.S. military's experience in Iraq and Afghanistan where it suffered 7,000 combat deaths in 20 years. While any loss of life is a tragedy, this comparatively small number stretched the U.S. military to its limit despite the consistent deployment of reservists and contractors.

If the U.S. Army, the largest American military branch, were to suffer Ukraine-level casualties, it would lose around 40% of its force size well over the 30% casualty threshold at which U.S. military doctrine deems a force destroyed. The Army would not be able to sustain itself with volunteers alone, especially in a country where young people's propensity to serve has plummeted to just 9% with no increase predicted in the near term.

Those who say that there is no way back from the AVF ignore the reality that it was

never a complete solution. The Gates Commission itself, the body that first recommended establishing the AVF, recognized that conscription would be necessary in "an emergency requiring a major increase in forces over an extended period." A protracted war of attrition like the Russo-Ukrainian War would certainly fit this description. While the United States maintains the Selective Service System (SSS) for such a contingency, the system has neither been tested nor modernized since the AVF's creation after the Vietnam War.

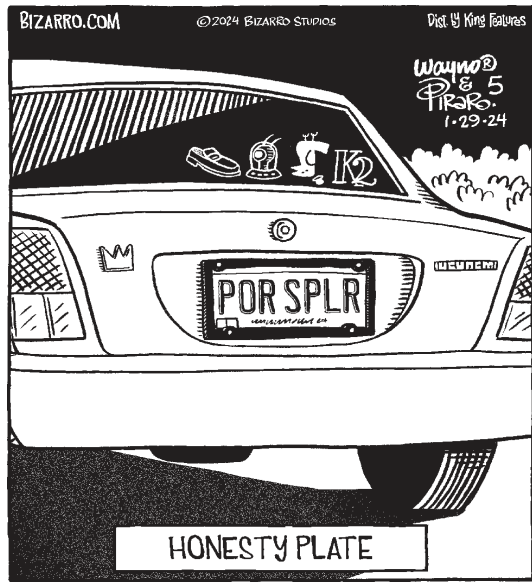
It is not realistic to assume that the U.S. military will simply never get involved in another large-scale conflict again. Whatever happens in Ukraine, Putin's Russia will continue to cast a long shadow over NATO allies in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, China's threat to Taiwan will continue to grow. If the United States were to come to the island's defense, war games predict massive casualties that would shatter the current AVF especially if the conflict protracts as recent research predicts it could.

Washington needs to stop thinking of conscription as a relic of the past and the SSS as a vestigial government body. Instead of routinely debating whether to eliminate the SSS, Congress should modernize it, test its weaknesses, and ensure that it is truly ready to be called upon at a moment's notice.

If the United States fails to adequately prepare in this way, it could end up like Ukraine or Russia, scrambling to fill its ranks with an archaic and overwhelmed conscription system that most Americans never thought they'd have to use.

Andrew Spafford is a researcher with Center for a New American Security's Military, Veterans, and Society Program.

Bizarro

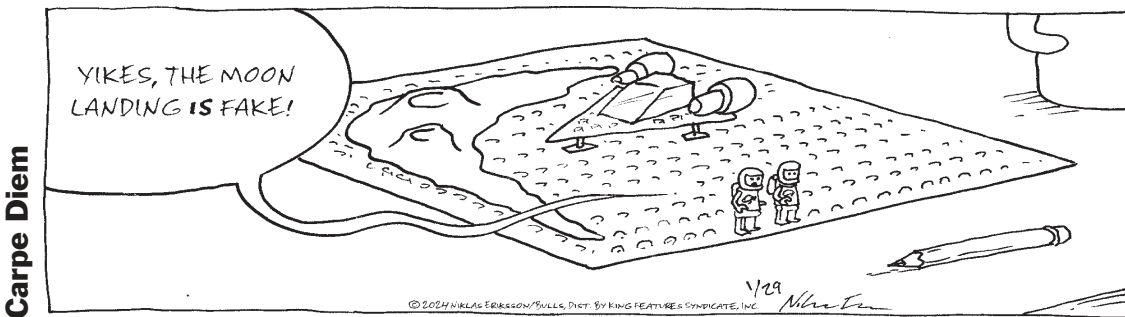
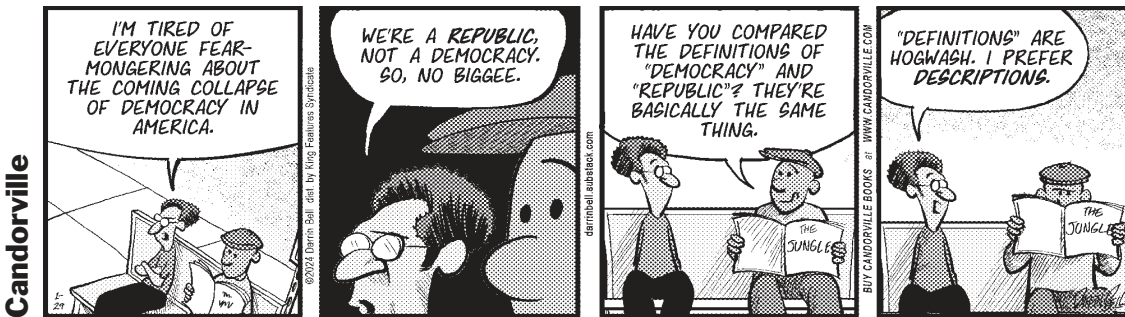
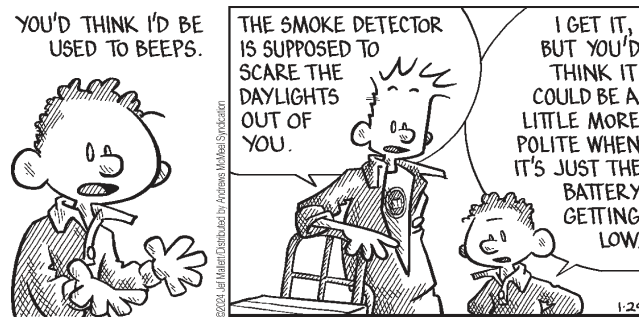
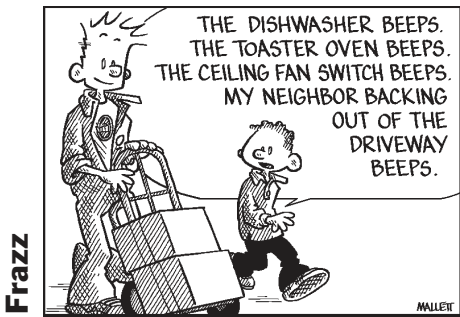


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbered squares.



- ACROSS: 1 Yoga class pads, 5 Rainbow, 8 Salon request, 12 Arm of the Pacific, 14 Gushing review, 15 Justin Bieber, by birth, 16 Pizza cooker, 17 Hwys., 18 Stopwatches, 20 Campfire leftovers, 23 Criminal, to cops, 24 Prejudice, 25 Inventive type, 28 Tummy muscles, 29 April forecasts, 30 Aye canceler, 32 Sacred places, 34 Apollo's instrument, 35 Comestibles, 36 Jazz band section, 37 Mogadishu resident, 40 Jokester, 41 Scratched (out), 42 Loped, 47 Low-calorie, 48 Set free, 49 Dread, 50 Time line period. DOWN: 1 Cato's 1200, 2 "Eureka!", 3 Stannum, 4 Entraps, 5 Unrepaired, 6 Actor Stephen, 7 Hikers' flasks, 8 On time, 9 Roof edge, 10 Winnebago owner, briefly, 11 Clothing store section, 13 Tosses in, 19 Nest egg choices, 20 Lawyers' gp., 21 Sis and bro, 22 Corned beef recipe, 23 Snoops, 25 Hymn of praise, 26 Cameo stone, 27 Scarce, 29 Iranian money, 31 "Indeed!", 33 Book club fan, 34 Some beers, 36 Fill fully, 37 Narcissist's love, 38 Tom Joad, for one, 39 Prefix for physics, 40 New York Liberty's org., 43 Vacuum's lack, 44 Snitch, 45 Tours season, 46 Lair.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Answer grid for the previous crossword puzzle.

1-29 CRYPTOQUIP MAIAG WAGUQLM LO N HAWQXA ZVNZ OFMXZQLMU INC ONUZAG ZVNM ZVA JGAWQLFU LMA HQH: N JGLMZL-ZCJA. Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF A FRENCH CHEESE FACTORY EXPLODES, THERE MIGHT BE ALMOST NOTHING LEFT EXCEPT DE-BRIE. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals R

# SCOREBOARD/GOLF

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

### Saturday's men's scores

#### EAST

Albany (NY) 86, New Hampshire 79  
 Binghamton 51, Maine 50  
 Boston U. 62, Lafayette 48  
 Bucknell 66, Army 56  
 CCSU 69, Wagner 68, OT  
 Colgate 73, American 54  
 Columbia 84, Penn 81  
 Cornell 83, Princeton 68  
 Dartmouth 75, Brown 71  
 Drexel 62, NC A&T 47  
 Duquesne 68, Fordham 59  
 Fairleigh Dickinson 93, Sacred Heart 91  
 La Salle 80, George Washington 70  
 Le Moyne 87, LIU 74  
 Lehigh 78, Holy Cross 72  
 Loyola (Md.) 74, Navy 70  
 Marshall 83, Southern Miss. 67  
 Maryland 73, Nebraska 51  
 Merrimack 74, St. Francis (Pa.) 55  
 Minnesota 83, Penn St. 74  
 Monmouth (NJ) 81, Hofstra 78  
 Morgan St. 85, Howard 79  
 NC Central 65, Md.-Eastern Shore 57  
 NJIT 75, UMBG 74  
 Providence 84, Georgetown 76  
 Rider 66, Mount St. Mary's 62  
 SC State 66, Delaware St. 64  
 Stony Brook 86, UNC-Wilmington 78, OT  
 Syracuse 77, NC State 65  
 Towson 67, Delaware 56  
 Vermont 67, Bryant 57  
 William & Mary 72, Northeastern 68  
 Yale 78, Harvard 65

#### SOUTH

Alabama 109, LSU 88  
 Alcorn St. 76, Florida A&M 67  
 Appalachian St. 82, James Madison 76  
 Belmont 74, Ill.-Chicago 65  
 Bethune-Cookman 82, Jackson St. 71  
 Charlotte 75, Tulane 71  
 Chattanooga 90, The Citadel 62  
 Coastal Carolina 85, Georgia St. 83, OT  
 Coll. of Charleston 90, Campbell 67  
 Duke 72, Clemson 71  
 E. Kentucky 89, North Florida 76  
 Elon 80, Hampton 74  
 Florida 102, Georgia 98, OT  
 Florida Gulf Coast 73, Austin Peay 67  
 Gardner-Webb 75, SC-Upstate 70  
 George Mason 92, Rhode Island 84  
 Georgia Southern 76, Old Dominion 70  
 Grambling St. 54, MVSU 46  
 High Point 83, Winthrop 81  
 Jacksonville St. 73, Liberty 62  
 Louisiana Tech 73, New Mexico St. 53  
 McNeese St. 102, New Orleans 65  
 Mercer 70, UNC-Greensboro 64  
 Miami 72, Pittsburgh 68  
 Middle Tennessee 79, FIU 61  
 Mississippi St. 64, Auburn 58  
 Morehead St. 64, W. Illinois 50  
 Norfolk St. 68, Coppin St. 58  
 North Alabama 90, Queens (NC) 84  
 North Carolina 75, Florida St. 68  
 Radford 73, Presbyterian 58  
 Richmond 69, Dayton 64  
 S. Illinois 60, Murray St. 58  
 Samford 75, ETSU 72  
 South Carolina 72, Missouri 64  
 South Florida 89, UTSA 72  
 Southern U. 80, Ark.-Pine Bluff 66  
 Stetson 80, Lipscomb 59  
 Tennessee 75, Vanderbilt 62  
 Texas A&M-CC 79, Northwestern St. 68  
 Troy 83, South Alabama 79  
 UNC-Asheville 71, Charleston Southern

Saint Mary's (Cal.) 70, Loyola Marymount 65  
 San Diego 69, Pepperdine 67  
 San Francisco 76, Portland 64  
 UC Irvine 77, CS Northridge 72  
 UC San Diego 92, UC Davis 59  
 UCLA 65, Southern Cal 50  
 UMKC 81, South Dakota 57  
 UNLV 77, San Jose St. 65  
 Utah St. 90, Boise St. 84, OT  
 Washington 70, Utah 73  
 Washington St. 78, Colorado 69  
 Wyoming 79, Colorado St. 76, OT

### Saturday's women's scores

#### EAST

Albany (NY) 54, New Hampshire 46  
 American 56, Colgate 54  
 Army 75, Bucknell 66  
 Boston U. 51, Lafayette 39  
 Brown 35, Dartmouth 31  
 Columbia 85, Penn 55  
 Delaware St. 61, SC State 49  
 Fairleigh D., Canisius 42  
 Fordham 60, George Washington 55  
 Harvard 61, Yale 52  
 Le Moyne 80, LIU Brooklyn 62  
 Lehigh 70, Holy Cross 60  
 Loyola (Md.) 70, Navy 67  
 Maine 59, Binghamton 56  
 Manhattan 64, Iona 56  
 Md.-Eastern Shore 78, NC Central 61  
 Merrimack 71, St. Francis (Pa.) 48  
 Niagara 80, Mount St. Mary's 63  
 Notre Dame 82, UConn 67  
 Princeton 85, Cornell 47  
 Rhode Island 63, UMass 48  
 Sacred Heart 68, Fairleigh Dickinson 51  
 Saint Joseph's 68, Davidson 42  
 Siena 78, Quinnipiac 60  
 St. Peter's 68, Rider 58  
 UMBG 72, NJIT 61  
 Vermont 61, Bryant 35  
 Wagner 49, CCSU 45  
 West Virginia 84, Iowa St. 78

#### SOUTH

Ark.-Pine Bluff 74, Southern U. 59  
 Cent. Arkansas 67, Kennesaw St. 60  
 Chattanooga 69, W. Carolina 59  
 E. Kentucky 79, North Florida 56  
 Florida A&M 60, Alcorn St. 56  
 Florida Gulf Coast 65, Austin Peay 54  
 Furman 58, Mercer 56  
 Grambling St. 81, MVSU 71  
 High Point 75, Winthrop 68  
 Howard 54, Morgan St. 51  
 Jackson St. 81, Bethune-Cookman 65  
 Jacksonville 87, Bellarmine 69  
 James Madison 78, Appalachian St. 61  
 Liberty 63, Jacksonville St. 32  
 Lindenwood (Mo.) 73, UT Martin 68  
 Longwood 103, Regent 52  
 Louisiana-Lafayette 59, Texas St. 52  
 Louisiana-Monroe 71, Coastal Carolina 68  
 Marshall 106, Georgia Southern 95  
 Middle Tennessee 92, FIU 62  
 New Orleans 74, McNeese St. 59  
 Norfolk St. 61, Coppin St. 53  
 North Alabama 75, Queens (NC) 71  
 Old Dominion 73, Georgia St. 65  
 Radford 65, Presbyterian 40  
 SC-Upstate 78, Gardner-Webb 59  
 Southern Miss. 77, South Alabama 43  
 Stetson 67, Lipscomb 55  
 Texas A&M-CC 50, Northwestern St. 45  
 Troy 91, Arkansas St. 84, OT  
 Tulsa 65, Charlotte 55  
 UCF 92, Houston 87, OT  
 UNC-Asheville 62, Charleston Southern

#### MIDWEST

Akron 61, N. Illinois 59  
 Ball St. 75, E. Michigan 50  
 Cent. Michigan 53, W. Michigan 45  
 Detroit 69, Cleveland St. 56  
 E. Illinois 71, Tennessee St. 67, OT  
 FAU 63, Wichita St. 56  
 Fort Wayne 61, N. Kentucky 55  
 Illinois St. 79, Drake 70  
 Iowa 92, Nebraska 73  
 Kansas St. 67, BYU 65  
 Kent St. 82, Bowling Green 74  
 Marquette 59, Butler 48  
 Michigan St. 82, Michigan 61  
 N. Iowa 105, Bradley 59  
 Ohio 71, Miami (Ohio) 55  
 Omaha 80, Denver 77  
 Providence 69, Xavier 60  
 South Dakota 72, UMKC 62  
 St. Thomas (MN) 76, North Dakota 66  
 Tennessee Tech 67, SIU-Edwardsville 58  
 Toledo 67, Buffalo 63  
 Wisconsin 73, Rutgers 62  
 Youngstown St. 71, Robert Morris 46

#### SOUTHWEST

Incarnate Word 77, Houston Christian 49  
 Lamar 59, SE Louisiana 45  
 Memphis 73, Rice 66  
 Oklahoma 60, Kansas 55  
 Prairie View 46, Alabama St. 43  
 SMU 75, UTSA 58  
 Texas 67, Cincinnati 50  
 Texas A&M Commerce 71, Nicholls 67  
 Texas Southern 61, Alabama A&M 55  
 Texas Tech 71, TCU 65  
 UALR 53, SE Missouri 47  
 UTEP 66, Sam Houston St. 61

#### FAR WEST

CS Bakersfield 66, Cal St.-Fullerton 56  
 Cal Baptist 97, Stephen F. Austin 75  
 Colorado St. 65, San Jose St. 49  
 Gonzaga 73, San Francisco 54  
 Grand Canyon 70, Texas-Arlington 35  
 Hawaii 63, Cal Poly 59  
 Idaho 60, N. Colorado 56  
 Idaho St. 55, Weber St. 47  
 Long Beach St. 54, UC Riverside 52  
 Loyola Marymount 75, Pepperdine 59  
 Montana 84, Sacramento St. 57  
 Montana St. 71, Portland St. 50  
 N. Arizona 89, E. Washington 81, OT  
 New Mexico 66, Air Force 51  
 New Mexico St. 66, Louisiana Tech 64, OT  
 Portland 64, San Diego 59  
 S. Utah 82, Abilene Christian 80  
 Saint Mary's (Cal) 74, Santa Clara 67  
 San Diego St. 79, Boise St. 54  
 UC Davis 62, UC San Diego 49  
 UC Irvine 67, CS Northridge 63  
 UNLV 92, Nevada 47  
 Utah Tech 75, Tarleton St. 48  
 Utah Valley St. 59, Seattle 56  
 Wyoming 69, Fresno St. 47

## PRO HOCKY

### PWHL

	W	L	OW	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	3	1	2	1	15	20	18
Minnesota	3	2	1	1	12	18	14
Boston	3	2	1	0	11	16	16
Ottawa	2	1	0	3	9	15	13
New York	2	4	1	0	8	17	16
Toronto	2	5	0	0	8	14	23

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

#### Friday, Jan. 26

Toronto 2, New York 0  
**Saturday's games**  
 Montreal 2, Ottawa 1, OT  
 Boston 4, Minnesota 3  
**Sunday's game**  
 Minnesota at New York  
**Saturday, Feb. 3**  
 Minnesota at Toronto

## DEALS

### Saturday's transactions

#### BASEBALL

**Major League Baseball American League**  
**CLEVELAND GUARDIANS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Tyler Beede on a minor league contract.  
**LOS ANGELES ANGELS** — Agreed to terms with LHP Matt Moore. Designated 3B Trey Cabbage for assignment.  
**National League**  
**WASHINGTON NATIONALS** — Agreed to terms with OF Joey Gallo on a one-year contract with a mutual option for 2025. Designated C Israel Pineda for assignment.

#### BASKETBALL

**National Basketball Association**  
**NEW ORLEANS PELICANS** — Signed F Malcolm Hill to a 10-day contract.  
**Women's National Basketball Association**  
**PHOENIX MERCURY** — Signed G Sug Sutton to a training camp contract.

#### FOOTBALL

**National Football League**  
**BALTIMORE RAVENS** — Promoted WR Dan Chisena and LB Josh Ross to the active roster from the practice squad.  
**CAROLINA PANTHERS** — Fired special teams coordinator Chris Tabor.  
**CHICAGO BEARS** — Named Eric Washington defensive coordinator.  
**CLEVELAND BROWNS** — Named Jacques Cesaire defensive line coach.  
**DETROIT LIONS** — Promoted FB Jason Cabinda and OL Michael Schofield to the active roster from the practice squad.  
**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** — Promoted NT Mike Pennel and CB Keith Taylor to the active roster from the practice squad.  
**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS** — Named Jesse Minter defensive coordinator.  
**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** — Named Vic Fangio defensive coordinator.  
**SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** — Promoted WR Willie Snead IV and LB Curtis Robinson to the active roster from the practice squad.

#### HOCKEY

**National Hockey League**  
**NHL** — Suspended New York Rangers D Jacob Trouba two games for elbowing during a gam on Jan. 26 against Vegas.  
**BOSTON BRUINS** — Recalled C Patrick Brown from Providence (AHL). Reassigned G Kyle Keyser to Maine (ECHL) from Providence (AHL).  
**COLORADO AVALANCHE** — Returned D Sam Malinski to Colorado (AHL) on loan. Reassigned G Trent Miner to Colorado (AHL) from Utah (ECHL).  
**COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS** — Recalled D Nick Blankenburg from Cleveland (AHL) loan.  
**DETROIT RED WINGS** — Recalled D Wyatt Newpower and G Ville Husso from Grand Rapids (AHL).  
**LOS ANGELES KINGS** — Recalled F Alex Turcotte from Ontario (AHL).  
**NEW YORK RANGERS** — Recalled D Connor Mackey from Hartford (AHL).  
**PITTSBURGH PENGUINS** — Reassigned LW Dillon Hamalik to Wheeling (ECHL) from Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (AHL).

#### SOCCER

**Major League Soccer**  
**ORLANDO CITY SC** — Loaned F Gaston Gonzalez to Nacional of the Uruguayan Primera Division on one-year contract with an option to buy.

## AP SPOTLIGHT

### Jan. 29

**1958** — The St. Louis Cardinals give Stan Musial a contract for \$100,000, making him the highest-paid player in the National League.  
**1971** — Hal Greer of Philadelphia becomes the sixth player in NBA history to score 20,000 points as the 76ers lose to Milwaukee 142-118.  
**1985** — Bryan Trottier of the New York Islanders scores his 1,000th point with a goal in a 4-4 tie with the Minnesota North Stars.  
**1994** — Julio Cesar Chavez suffers his first loss in 91 fights when Frankie Randall knocks him down in the 11th round and wins the WBC super lightweight championship on a split decision.  
**2005** — Irina Slutskaya joins the elite company of Katarina Witt and Sonja Henie by winning a sixth title at the European Figure Skating Championships.  
**2018** — The Cleveland Indians announce they will remove "Chief Wahoo" caricature logo from uniforms in 2019.

## GOLF

### Farmers Insurance Open

**PGA Tour Saturday La Jolla, Calif. Torrey Pines**  
**Yardage: 7,765; Par 72**  
**Purse: \$9 million**  
**Final Round**

Matthieu Pavon, \$1,620,000	69-65-72-69-275	-13
Nicolai Hojgaard, \$981,000	67-66-73-70-276	-12
Stephan Jaeger, \$477,000	68-64-73-72-277	-11
Jake Knapp, \$477,000	69-69-70-69-277	-11
Nate Lashley, \$477,000	73-67-70-67-277	-11
Tony Finau, \$303,750	69-66-74-69-278	-10
Beau Hossler, \$303,750	68-70-72-68-278	-10
Kevin Yu, \$303,750	64-74-73-67-278	-10
Ludvig Aberg \$236,250	68-72-69-70-279	-9
Taylor Pendrith, \$236,250	73-66-69-71-279	-9
Patrick Rodgers, \$236,250	73-64-73-69-279	-9
Xander Schauffele, \$236,250	69-68-72-70-279	-9
Akshay Bhatia, \$156,536	70-71-69-70-280	-8
Doug Ghim, \$156,536	69-70-75-66-280	-8
Max Homa, \$156,536	70-70-71-69-280	-8
Hideki Matsuyama, \$156,536	66-71-76-67-280	-8
T. Montgomer, \$156,536	68-70-70-72-280	-8
Tom Whitney, \$156,536	70-67-75-68-280	-8
Will Zalatoris, \$156,536	73-68-68-71-280	-8
Ryan Brehm, \$102,330	71-70-68-72-281	-7
Rafael Campos, \$102,330	70-69-71-71-281	-7
Thomas Detry, \$102,330	66-68-73-74-281	-7
Emiliano Grillo, \$102,330	67-69-73-72-281	-7
Mark Hubbard, \$102,330	69-72-71-69-281	-7
Joseph Bramlett, \$66,263	70-66-74-72-282	-6
Parker Coody, \$66,263	71-67-71-73-282	-6
Trace Crowe, \$66,263	70-69-69-74-282	-6
Chesson Hadley, \$66,263	67-70-74-71-282	-6
Shane Lowry, \$66,263	66-73-73-70-282	-6
Adam Schenk, \$66,263	70-68-73-71-282	-6
Robby Shelton, \$66,263	70-69-70-73-282	-6
Scott Stallings, \$66,263	68-69-74-71-282	-6
Joe Highsmith, \$50,175	70-67-71-75-283	-5
Ryo Hisatsune, \$50,175	65-75-73-70-283	-5
Aaron Rai, \$50,175	66-70-75-72-283	-5
Hayden Springer, \$50,175	73-67-73-70-283	-5
Aaron Baddeley, \$40,050	69-72-73-70-284	-4
Austin Eckroat, \$40,050	68-72-71-73-284	-4
Nick Hardy, \$40,050	67-71-73-73-284	-4
Michael Kim, \$40,050	67-68-77-72-284	-4
Ben Martin, \$40,050	73-67-72-72-284	-4
Maverick McNealy, \$40,050	67-70-72-75-284	-4
Erik Barnes, \$28,530	72-69-73-71-285	-3
Keegan Bradley, \$28,530	73-68-71-73-285	-3
Min Woo Lee, \$28,530	72-68-72-73-285	-3
Justin Lower, \$28,530	71-70-72-72-285	-3
Sam Stevens, \$28,530	71-68-72-74-285	-3
Alejandro Tost, \$28,530	66-73-72-74-285	-3
Sami Valimaki, \$28,530	70-67-73-75-285	-3

### Drive On Championship

**PGA Tour Saturday**  
**At Bradenton Country Club Bradenton, Fla.**  
**Purse: \$1.8 million**  
**Yardage: 6,557; Par: 71**  
**Third Round**

Nelly Korda	65-67-68-200	-13
Ayaka Furue	68-67-69-204	-9
Megan Khang	69-69-66-204	-9
Lydia Ko	65-70-69-204	-9
Robyn Choi	71-68-66-205	-8
Auston Kim	68-73-64-205	-8
Sei Young Kim	67-69-69-205	-8
Xiyu Lin	69-66-70-205	-8
Gemma Dryburgh	69-68-69-206	-7
Jasmine Suwannapura	69-68-69-206	-7
Lexi Thompson	70-67-69-206	-7
Nasa Hataoka	68-71-69-208	-5
Lucy Li	67-69-72-208	-5
Lindy Duncan	71-71-67-209	-4
Brooke Henderson	71-69-69-209	-4
A Lim Kim	72-69-68-209	-4
Mi Hyang Lee	71-68-70-209	-4
Yealimi Noh	69-71-69-209	-4
Madelene Sagstrom	70-69-70-209	-4
Ruoning Yin	67-72-70-209	-4
Arpichaya Yubol	68-70-71-209	-4
Marina Alex	68-71-71-210	-3
Celine Boutier	70-68-72-210	-3
Lauren Coughlin	71-70-69-210	-3
Somi Lee	69-65-76-210	-3
Emily Pedersen	75-66-69-210	-3
Mao Saigo	73-68-69-210	-3
Albane Valenzuela	72-69-69-210	-3
Xiaowen Yin	73-69-68-210	-3
Hye Jin Choi	71-68-72-211	-2
Mone Inami	71-70-70-211	-2
Yu Liu	72-69-70-211	-2
Allisen Corpuz	70-69-73-212	-1
Isabella Fierro	69-69-74-212	-1
Linn Grant	70-69-73-212	-1
Wei-Ling Hsu	69-72-71-212	-1
Cheyenne Knight	71-70-71-212	-1
Nanna Koerstz Madsen	66-72-74-212	-1
Yan Liu	71-68-73-212	-1
Hae-Ran Ryu	70-71-71-212	-1
Maja Stark	76-64-72-212	-1
Olivia Cowan	73-68-72-213	E
Gurleen Kaur	71-71-71-213	E
Andrea Lee	71-70-72-213	E
In Gee Chun	72-69-73-214	+1
Jodi Ewart Shadoff	75-66-73-214	+1
Ally Ewing	71-68-75-214	+1
Nataliya Guseva	71-69-74-214	+1
Minji Kang	67-69-78-214	+1
Aline Krauter	69-72-73-214	+1
Pernilla Lindberg	70-70-74-214	+1
Stephanie Meadow	70-72-72-214	+1

# Pavon gets 1st PGA win

By **BERNIE WILSON**

Associated Press

**SAN DIEGO —** Oui! Matthieu Pavon became the first player to win a PGA Tour event under the French flag since World War II when he made an 8-foot putt on No. 18 at Torrey Pines South on Saturday for a dramatic birdie and a one-shot victory in the Farmers Insurance Open.

He raised his arms in celebration and shouted before hugging caddie Mark Sherwood after the putt rolled in as the municipal gem high above the Pacific Ocean glowed under the late-afternoon sun.

Pavon glowed, too. He said he almost quit golf 10 years ago because of the yips.

“It is big for our country,” the 31-year-old PGA Tour rookie said. “I hope it will inspire a lot of people, because coming from an amateur player which is 800 in the world to a PGA Tour winner is pretty big.

“I still can

# NBA

## Scoreboard

### ROUNDUP

# James, Lakers beat Warriors in 2OT

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	35	11	.761	—
Philadelphia	29	15	.659	5
New York	29	17	.630	6
Brooklyn	18	27	.400	16½
Toronto	16	29	.356	18½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	24	22	.522	—
Orlando	23	22	.511	½
Atlanta	18	27	.400	5½
Charlotte	10	34	.227	13
Washington	8	37	.178	15½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	32	14	.696	—
Cleveland	27	16	.628	3½
Indiana	26	20	.565	6
Chicago	21	25	.457	11
Detroit	5	40	.111	26½
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New Orleans	26	20	.565	—
Dallas	25	21	.543	1
Houston	21	24	.467	4½
Memphis	18	27	.400	7½
San Antonio	10	36	.217	16
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	32	13	.711	—
Minnesota	32	14	.696	½
Denver	32	15	.681	1
Utah	24	23	.511	9
Portland	13	32	.289	19
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	30	14	.682	—
Sacramento	26	18	.591	4
Phoenix	26	19	.578	4½
L.A. Lakers	24	23	.511	7½
Golden State	19	24	.442	10½

*Associated Press*  
**SAN FRANCISCO** — Back and forth they went, one-upping the other, two of the greatest to ever play each believing he could will his team to win. Stepback 3s, fadeaway jumpers, drives and dishes. Two overtimes.

LeBron James vs. Stephen Curry. At their finest.

And at the very end, James made a pair of free throws with 1.2 seconds left to cap his triple-double of 36 points, career-high 20 rebounds and 12 assists, outdueling Curry as the Los Angeles Lakers held off the Golden State Warriors 145-144 on Saturday night.

“It’s something I’ll be able to talk about with my grandkids, talk about me being able to compete with one of the greatest players to ever play the game,” James said. “So hopefully I can be cool with my grandkids at that point, for sure.”

Curry danced through the paint for a layup that sent the game to overtime. He knocked down a 3-pointer high over Anthony Davis in the second overtime for a lead.

James scored the first points of a second extra session and found D’Angelo Russell the next time down for a 3.

“Every year we get to do this, the back-and-forth battles, all the Finals runs, to the playoffs last year, after the horn sounded tonight there was a little laugh of we can’t like imagine a scenario where a game like tonight happens, his year, what, 21, and my year 15,” Curry said. “All the other guys in the league who have been doing it 15-plus years, KD (Kevin Durant), CP (Chris Paul), it’s insane.

“You look forward to the battles, but you also appreciate the mutual respect of what it takes to keep doing what you’re doing at this level because only a few people know how hard it is. I’m happy to be in that group.”

Lakers coach Darvin Ham had to stay focused as he sat close-up to witness the greatness.

“Oh, man,” he exhaled afterward.

“Just trying to control myself first and foremost as a basketball fan,” he said. “They should be real happy in New York, this was a hell of a basketball game, a high-level basketball game. Two legends going back and forth, two great organizations. It was fun to be a part of. It’s just one of those wins where it showed our character. Our group is really coming together.”

**Nuggets 111, 76ers 105:** Nikola Jokic had 26 points and 16 rebounds, but was denied his rematch with fellow MVP contender Joel Embiid when host Denver fended off short-handed but gritty Philadelphia.



Nic Courty/AP

**Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James shoots a free throw to score the final point against the Golden State Warriors during the second overtime Saturday in San Francisco.**

Philadelphia’s star center missed a game at Denver for a fourth consecutive season after the team’s medical staff determined he shouldn’t play on his balky left knee.

Jamal Murray added 23 points for Denver and Michael Porter Jr. had 20. Paul Reed led Philadelphia with a career-best 30 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 25.

**Kings 120, Mavericks 115:** De’Aaron Fox scored 34 points and visiting Sacramento won, with Dallas star Luka Doncic finishing with 28 points, 17 assists and 10 rebounds a night after scoring a franchise-record 73 points in a win at Atlanta.

Harrison Barnes had 20 points, Kevin Huerter added 18 and Domantas Sabonis had 17 points and a game-high 11 rebounds as the Kings won their third straight following a season-worst four-game losing streak.

The Mavericks split their back-to-back, having won 148-143 at Atlanta on Friday night when Doncic tied for the fourth-most points in a game in NBA history behind only Wilt Chamberlain and Kobe Bryant.

**Clippers 115, Celtics 96:** Kawhi Leonard scored 26 points in only 29 minutes and visiting Los Angeles routed Boston.

Paul George added 17 points for the Clippers, who used a 21-0 run in the third quarter to win their fifth straight and avenge a 37-point home loss to Boston in December. Leonard, George and the rest of the starters sat out the

fourth quarter.

It was the most lopsided loss of the season for Boston, which lost for just the second time at home after starting the season 20-0 at TD Garden.

**Bucks 141, Pelicans 117:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points and 12 rebounds in host Milwaukee’s blowout victory over New Orleans.

Damian Lillard added 26 points, nine assists and six rebounds. Brook Lopez scored 24 points with 6-for-9 shooting from 3-point range, and Bobby Portis had 20 points.

The Bucks shot 56% as they improved to 2-1 in their third and final game with Joe Prunty as interim head coach following the firing of Adrian Griffin. Doc Rivers held his introductory news conference as Griffin’s permanent replacement Saturday.

**Knicks 125, Heat 109:** Jalen Brunson had 32 points and eight assists and host New York won, winning its sixth straight and sending Miami to a sixth consecutive loss.

Julius Randle added 19 points and nine rebounds for the Knicks, but left with 4:27 remaining after landing hard on his right shoulder when Jaime Jaquez Jr. stepped in front of him trying to take a charge on Randle’s drive to the basket.

Coach Tom Thibodeau said after the game that he knew only that Randle was being checked by the medical staff and didn’t know the nature of the injury.

**Spurs 113, Timberwolves 112:**

Devin Vassell had 25 points, Victor Wembanyama added 23 points and 10 rebounds and host San Antonio rallied to beat Minnesota.

Anthony Edwards had 32 points and 12 rebounds for Minnesota, and Rudy Gobert and Karl-Anthony Towns had 19 points each. Towns missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer as the Timberwolves had a two-game winning streak snapped.

**Wizards 118, Pistons 104:** Kyle Kuzma scored 30 points and visiting Washington beat Detroit for interim coach Brian Keefe’s first victory.

Keefe lost his first game Thursday, hours after Wes Unseld Jr. was moved to the Wizards’ front office. Jordan Poole added 17 points to help Washington end a six-game losing streak.

**Jazz 134, Hornets 122:** Lauri Markkanen had 33 points and 12 rebounds and visiting Utah beat Charlotte for its 11th victory in 15 games.

Collin Sexton added 24 points and 13 assists. The Jazz shot 56% from the field, made 17 3-pointers and built 36-point lead in the third quarter.

**Nets 106, Rockets 104:** Cam Thomas scored 37 points and host Brooklyn outlasted Houston to snap a three-game losing streak.

Mikal Bridges and Dorian Finney-Smith each had 19 points for Brooklyn. Jalen Green, Dillan Brooks and Cam Whitmore each had 19 points for the Rockets. They have lost seven of their last 10 games.

Saturday’s games					
Washington 118, Detroit 104	New York 125, Miami 109	Denver 111, Philadelphia 105	Brooklyn 106, Houston 104	L.A. Clippers 115, Boston 96	
Utah 134, Charlotte 122	Milwaukee 141, New Orleans 117	San Antonio 113, Minnesota 112	Sacramento 120, Dallas 115	L.A. Lakers 145, Golden State 144, 2OT	
Sunday’s games					
Oklahoma City at Detroit	Memphis at Indiana	Phoenix at Orlando	Toronto at Atlanta	Chicago at Portland	
Monday’s games					
L.A. Clippers at Cleveland	New York at Charlotte	New Orleans at Boston	Phoenix at Miami	Utah at Brooklyn	
L.A. Lakers at Houston	Minnesota at Oklahoma City	Sacramento at Memphis	Washington at San Antonio	Orlando at Dallas	
Milwaukee at Denver	Philadelphia at Portland				
Tuesday’s games					
Indiana at Boston	L.A. Lakers at Atlanta	Utah at New York	Toronto at Chicago	Philadelphia at Golden State	
Scoring leaders					
Through Saturday					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Embiid, PHI	33	397	354	1187	36.0
Doncic, DAL	39	457	277	1343	34.4
Gil.-Alex., OKC	44	481	357	1370	31.1
Antetokoun., MIL	44	509	328	1365	31.0
Durant, PHO	38	391	227	1096	28.8
Booker, PHO	36	353	226	1015	28.2
Mitchell, CLE	34	330	176	943	27.7
Fox, SAC	38	373	187	1051	27.7
Curry, GS	40	350	205	1092	27.3
Young, ATL	40	333	283	1079	27.0
Tatum, BOS	43	387	252	1154	26.8
Brunson, NY	44	412	223	1171	26.6
Jokic, DEN	46	471	220	1210	26.3
Edwards, MIN	43	383	240	1113	25.9
Maxey, PHI	42	370	209	1078	25.7

## NHL

## ROUNDUP

# Oilers nearly at record win streak

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Connor McDavid had a goal and three assists and the Edmonton Oilers won their 16th straight game to move within one of tying the NHL record, beating the Nashville Predators 4-1 on Saturday.

Edmonton will attempt to tie the record set by the 1992-93 Pittsburgh Penguins when it returns from the All-Star break to play at Vegas on Feb. 6. The Oilers matched the 2016-17 Columbus Blue Jackets for the second-longest streak.

"It's exciting, obviously it's a great run, obviously the goalies have played great," McDavid said. "This past week wasn't our best hockey and we found a way to get three wins, which is a great sign. We've gotten great goaltending, the back end has been good, the kill has been amazing. Those are all good things."

Leon Draisaitl had a goal and two assists, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Zach Hyman also scored and Stuart Skinner made 28 saves to help Edmonton improve to 29-15-1. The Oilers are 24-3-0 in their last 27 and have a franchise-record streak of 14 games without allowing more than two goals.

"It's special," Draisaitl said. "It takes a lot of good efforts and a lot of good games to get to that number. We have been a bit sloppy the last three games, but have obviously had some individual performances that have gotten us the wins. You need that sometimes, too. It's been a great stretch for us."

Colton Sissons scored for Nashville. The Predators who have lost three of four.

"I thought we outplayed them, but unfortunately it doesn't matter when you don't get two points," Sissons said. "It still hurts."

**Canucks 5, Blue Jackets 4 (OT):** Elias Pettersson got his second goal of the night 4 minutes into overtime, Brock Boeser had three goals and an assist, and host Vancouver rallied from three goals down in the third period to beat Columbus.

J.T. Miller and Quinn Hughes each had three assists, Pius Suter had two and Pettersson also had one to help Vancouver improve to 9-0-2 in its last 11 games. Thatcher Demko finished with 25 saves.

After missing the playoffs seven times in the last eight years, Vancouver heads into the All-Star break at 32-11-5 and leads the Pacific Division with 71 points.

**Penguins 3, Canadiens 2 (OT):** Marcus Pettersson scored 2:43 into overtime to lift host Pittsburgh past Montreal.

Lars Eller scored his ninth goal



AMBER BRACKEN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

**The Nashville Predators' Roman Josi, left, keeps pressure on the Oilers' Connor McDavid during the second period in Edmonton, Alberta, on Saturday. The Oilers won 4-1 for their 16th straight victory.**

of the season for Pittsburgh in his 1,000th NHL game. Jake Guentzel scored his 22nd goal and Sidney Crosby continued a seven-game point streak with an assist.

Evgeni Malkin established a season-high five-game point streak, while defenseman Erik Karlsson's 10-game point streak ended. Tristan Jarry made 25 saves for the Penguins, who snapped a three-game losing streak.

**Flames 1, Blackhawks 0:** Elias Lindholm scored a power-play goal late in the second period and Jacob Markstrom made 32 saves as host Calgary snapped a four-game losing streak.

The last-place Blackhawks (14-34-2) have been shut out in two consecutive games, three of their last four and four of the past six. Minus injured rookie star Connor Bedard, they've lost 10 straight on the road and are winless in their last 20 away from home (0-19-1).

It was the 20th career shutout and second this season for Markstrom, who improved to 14-13-2 as Calgary (22-22-5) finished a 2-4-0 homestand.

**Stars 5, Capitals 4 (OT):** Defenseman Thomas Harley scored at 3:27 of overtime for his second goal of the game and second extra-period winner in two games for host Dallas.

Wyatt Johnston, Mason Marchment and Matt Duchene also scored and Jake Oettinger made 24 saves for the Stars, who are 18-3-3 against the Capitals since the

2008-09 season.

Dallas led 4-2 before a 6-on-4 goal by Alex Ovechkin and a 6-on-5 goal by Dylan Strome in the last two minutes of regulation sent the game into overtime.

**Panthers 3, Islanders 2:** Oliver Ekman-Larsson scored 1:57 into overtime and visiting Florida beat New York for its fourth straight win.

Matthew Tkachuk had a goal and an assist, and Sam Reinhart also scored for the Panthers. Anthony Stolarz made 21 saves.

**Hurricanes 3, Coyotes 1:** Dmitry Orlov and Jesper Fast scored 13 seconds apart in the final minute of the third period, and host Carolina beat Arizona.

Martin Necas also scored for the Hurricanes, who have won four of their last five games and remained two points behind the New York Rangers for first place in the Metropolitan Division. Seth Jarvis had two assists and Antti Raanta made 11 saves.

**Maple Leafs 4, Jets 2:** Auston Matthews scored his NHL-leading 40th goal to reach 600 career points and visiting Toronto completed a home-and-home sweep of Winnipeg.

Hometown favorite Ryan Reaves, John Tavares and Simon Benoit, with an empty-net goal, all scored to help the Maple Leafs win their third straight. Mitch Marner and Morgan Rielly each had two assists.

**Ducks 3, Wild 2:** Troy Terry scored his second goal of the

game with 8:20 left to break a tie and visiting Anaheim ended a 13-game losing streak against Minnesota.

A few seconds after exiting the penalty box, Terry gathered a puck in the neutral zone. His shot from the left circle was blocked by Ryan Hartman, but Terry followed the rebound and beat Filip Gustavsson from the slot.

**Red Wings 5, Golden Knights 2:** Dylan Larkin scored his 200th and 201st career goals to help host Detroit beat Vegas.

Jake Walman, Joe Veleno and Andrew Copp also scored, and Alex Lyon stopped 28 shots for the Red Wings. Moritz Seider and Lucas Raymond each added two assists to help Detroit improve to 9-2-1 in its last 12 games.

**Sabres 5, Sharks 2:** JJ Peterka scored two goals for the second straight game and visiting Buffalo rallied to beat San Jose.

**Lightning 6, Devils 3:** Defenseman Victor Hedman had an assist for his 700th career point, Brandon Hagel and Brayden Point each scored twice and host Tampa Bay won its seventh straight at home.

**Bruins 6, Flyers 2:** David Pastrnak had two goals and an assist, James van Riemsdyk had a goal and an assist and visiting Boston beat Philadelphia.

**Rangers 7, Senators 2:** Artemi Panarin had a goal and two assists, and visiting New York scored seven unanswered goals to beat Ottawa.

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
Boston	49	31	9	9	71	173 128
Florida	49	31	14	4	66	158 127
Tampa Bay	50	27	18	5	59	175 164
Toronto	47	25	14	8	58	166 150
Detroit	49	26	18	5	57	174 158
Buffalo	49	22	23	4	48	146 155
Montreal	49	20	21	8	48	136 175
Ottawa	45	18	25	2	38	151 165

### Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
N.Y. Rangers	49	30	16	3	63	161 142
Carolina	48	28	15	5	61	163 144
Philadelphia	50	25	19	6	56	147 148
N.Y. Islanders	49	20	17	12	52	143 166
Pittsburgh	46	22	17	7	51	138 126
New Jersey	47	24	20	3	51	161 168
Washington	47	22	18	7	51	115 146
Columbus	48	15	23	10	40	145 180

### Western Conference

Central Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
Colorado	49	32	14	3	67	190 153
Dallas	49	30	13	6	66	183 151
Winnipeg	47	30	12	5	65	148 109
Nashville	49	26	22	1	53	148 152
St. Louis	47	25	20	2	52	137 149
Arizona	48	23	22	3	49	143 147
Minnesota	49	21	23	5	47	149 166
Chicago	50	14	34	2	30	105 177

### Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
Vancouver	49	33	11	5	71	186 127
Vegas	50	29	15	6	64	163 138
Edmonton	45	29	15	1	59	160 124
Los Angeles	46	22	15	9	53	145 126
Seattle	48	20	18	10	50	136 143
Calgary	49	22	22	5	49	149 155
Anaheim	49	17	30	2	36	126 168
San Jose	49	13	32	4	30	103 196

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

### Friday's games

Vegas 5, N.Y. Rangers 2  
Florida 3, Pittsburgh 2, SO  
Colorado 5, Los Angeles 1  
St. Louis 4, Seattle 3, OT

### Saturday's games

Edmonton 4, Nashville 1  
Vancouver 5, Columbus 4, OT  
Pittsburgh 3, Montreal 2, OT  
Calgary 1, Chicago 0  
Dallas 5, Washington 4, OT  
Florida 3, N.Y. Islanders 2, OT  
Carolina 3, Arizona 1  
Toronto 4, Winnipeg 2  
Anaheim 3, Minnesota 2  
Detroit 5, Vegas 2  
Buffalo 5, San Jose 2  
Tampa Bay 6, New Jersey 3  
Boston 6, Philadelphia 2  
N.Y. Rangers 7, Ottawa 2

### Sunday's games

Los Angeles at St. Louis  
Columbus at Seattle

### Monday's game

Nashville at Ottawa

### Tuesday's games

Columbus at St. Louis  
Seattle at San Jose

### Wednesday's games

Ottawa at Detroit  
Los Angeles at Nashville  
San Jose at Anaheim

### Scoring leaders

#### Through Saturday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Nikita Kucherov, TB	49	32	53	85
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	49	31	53	84
David Pastrnak, BOS	49	33	39	72
Connor McDavid, EDM	43	20	47	67
J.T. Miller, VAN	49	21	46	67
Mikko Rantanen, COL	49	27	39	66
Artemi Panarin, NYR	49	30	36	66
Elias Pettersson, VAN	49	27	37	64
Quinn Hughes, VAN	49	12	50	62
Sam Reinhart, FLA	49	37	25	62
William Nylander, TOR	47	23	38	61
Cale Makar, COL	44	12	46	58
Auston Matthews, TOR	46	40	18	58
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	45	23	34	57

# AUSTRALIAN OPEN

## First: Medvedev's road to final took more effort

FROM PAGE 24

Carlos Alcaraz's 23:40 at the 2022 U.S. Open.

He's also the first in the Open era to lose two Grand Slam finals in five sets after taking a 2-0 lead.

Medvedev lost back-to-back Australian Open finals — to Djokovic in 2021 and to Rafael Nadal after holding a two-set lead the following year.

He won three five-set matches to reach the championship match this year — his sixth major final.

Sinner only dropped one set through six rounds — in a third-set tiebreaker against Djokovic — until he lost two straight to Medvedev.

It wasn't until a break in the sixth game of the fifth set that he really had a full grip on his first Grand Slam title.

Medvedev started like a man who wanted to win quickly, after all that time spent on the court.

In two of Medvedev's five-set matches — a second-round win over Emil Ruusuvuori that finished at almost 4 in the morning, and a 4-hour, 18-minute semifinal win over No. 6 Alexander Zverev — he had to come back from two sets down. Nobody had done that on the way to an Australian Open final since Pete Sampras in 1995.

The 27-year-old Russian had spent 20 hours and 33 minutes on court through six rounds. That was almost six hours longer than Sinner took to reach the final.

Sinner didn't give Djokovic a look at a break point as he ended the 10-time Australian Open champion's 33-match unbeaten streak at Melbourne Park dating to 2018.

Against Medvedev, though, he was in trouble early. Medvedev broke in the third game and took the first set in 36 minutes.

He had two more service breaks in the fourth and sixth games of the second set but was broken himself at 5-1 trying to serve it out. He was successful the next try.

The third set went with serve until the 10th game, when Medvedev was a point from leveling at 5-5 until three forehand errors gave Sinner the set and the momentum.

He won the fourth set, again with a service break in the 10th game, recovering immediately to win three points after mishitting a forehand so far out that it shocked the Rod Laver Arena crowd.

And so the tournament equaled a Grand Slam Open-era record set at the 1983 U.S. Open with a 35th match going to five sets.

In the sixth game of the fifth set, Sinner had triple break point against a fatiguing Medvedev. He missed with his first chance but converted with his next, a forehand winner, for a 4-2 lead. From there, he didn't give Medvedev another chance.

Medvedev had faced either Djokovic or Rafael Nadal in all five of his previous major finals. He beat Djokovic to win the 2021 U.S. Open title but lost all the others, including the 2021 final in Australia to Djokovic and the 2022 final — after taking the first two sets — against Nadal.

He changed up his usual style, going to the net more regularly in the first two sets and standing closer to the baseline to receive serve than he has done recently.

Medvedev has been saying throughout the tournament that he has more stamina than he used to, and is mentally stronger in the tough five-setters. He certainly showed incredible endurance but came up just short — again.

Medvedev won his first six matches against Sinner, but has now lost four in a row — including three finals.

Medvedev sent a message to his family in his on-court interview:

"Unfortunately I couldn't make it today, but I'm gonna try to make it work next time for you," he said. "It always hurts to lose in the final."



ANDY WONG/AP

Italy's Jannik Sinner holds the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup aloft Sunday after beating Russia's Daniil Medvedev in the men's singles final at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia.



ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AP

Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus celebrates Saturday after beating Zheng Qinwen of China in the women's singles final of the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia. The title is her second straight Down Under.

# Sabalenka wins second straight women's crown

BY JOHN PYE  
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — In the back of her mind Aryna Sabalenka didn't want to be, in her words, that player who wins a major title and disappears.

Winning her first Grand Slam crown in Australia a year ago gave Sabalenka the confidence she could do it again. Losing the U.S. Open final last September gave her the extra motivation.

Sabalenka ensured she wasn't a one-hit wonder by clinching back-to-back Australian Open titles with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Zheng Qinwen on Saturday in a one-sided women's final that contrasted sharply with her comeback three-set victory here over Elena Rybakina last year.

"I just wanted to show that I'm able to be consistently there and I'm able to win another one," the 25-year-old from Belarus said. "So compared to last year, it's a completely different me. Compared to the U.S. Open, once again, it's a different me; I'm more controlled and kind of like don't let the rest of the things come to my mind."

In 2022, Sabalenka struggled so badly with her serve in tense moments that she doubted she could win a major. Now she's relying on it to break down opponents. She didn't serve a double-fault in the final, and she didn't face a break point.

No. 2-seeded Sabalenka set the tone with big, deep forehands and converted service breaks early in each set against the 21-year-old Zheng, who was making her debut

## Scoreboard

### Sunday

At Melbourne Park  
Melbourne, Australia  
Purse: AUD38,923,200  
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor  
Men's Singles  
Championship

Jannik Sinner (4), Italy, def. Daniil Medvedev (3), Russia, 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3.

### Women's Doubles Championship

Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, and Elise Mertens (2), Belgium, def. Lyudmyla Kichenok, Ukraine, and Jelena Ostapenko (11), Latvia, 6-1, 7-5.

### Saturday

### Women's Singles Championship

Aryna Sabalenka (2), Belarus, def. Zheng Qinwen (12), China, 6-3, 6-2.

### Men's Doubles Championship

Rohan Bopanna, India, and Matthew Ebden (2), Australia, def. Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori, Italy, 7-6 (0), 7-5.

more confidence in her game and more self-belief.

"The first one is always special because I feel like it's more emotional," she said. "For the second time, it's just such a relief."

Only two things slowed down Sabalenka's progress Saturday to her second Grand Slam singles title.

In the third game of the second set, with Zheng serving, the match was interrupted after an activist started yelling out. The match continued after the man was escorted out by security.

Then, when she was serving for the match, Sabalenka had three championship points at 40-0 but missed two with unforced forehand errors and another with Zheng's clever drop shot.

After giving Zheng a break-point chance, she bounced the ball away behind her in disgust. But she recovered her composure to win the next three points.

Sabalenka is the first woman since Victoria Azarenka in 2012 and '13 to win back-to-back Australian Open titles, and the fifth since 2000 to win the championship here without dropping a set — a group that includes Serena Williams.

Zheng's push to the final was two rounds better than her previous best run to the quarterfinals in New York last September.

She was the first player in four decades to advance through six rounds without playing anyone ranked in the top 50 — and was only the third in the Open era to reach a major final without facing a seeded player.

in a Grand Slam final.

The journey and the destination were equally important for Sabalenka.

In the semifinals, she avenged her U.S. Open final loss to No. 4-ranked Coco Gauff with a straight-set win. That followed straight-set wins over 2021 French Open winner Barbora Krejckova in the quarterfinals and Amanda Anisimova in the fourth round.

"I'm definitely a different person and a player and I have more experience playing the last stages of the Grand Slams," Sabalenka said, reflecting on the last 13 months. "There was some tough moments for me losing the U.S. Open final — that loss actually motivated me so much to work even harder."

And that, she said, gave her

## TOP 25 ROUNDUP

# No. 23 Iowa State upsets No. 7 Kansas

## Cyclones' home winning streak at 13

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Tre King had 21 points and nine rebounds, and No. 23 Iowa State knocked off No. 7 Kansas 79-75 on Saturday.

Iowa State (16-4, 5-2) improved to 13-0 at home this season while enhancing its status as a Big 12 contender. Keshon Gilbert scored 16 points for the Cyclones, and reserve Curtis Jones had 15 points.

All three contributed to a season-best performance from the 3-point line for the Cyclones, who went 14-for-30 from beyond the arc.

“Playing in that atmosphere, you think every shot you’re taking is going in,” Iowa State guard Tamin Lipsey said. “Just how loud the fans are and the vibe in the whole arena is so good, you take all the shots with confidence.”

Lipsey finished with 10 points, including a 3-pointer and a layup that helped Iowa State seize control early in the second half. Jones' 3-pointer increased the Cyclones' advantage to 55-43 with 11:44 left.

“Honestly, it was just playing for each other,” King said. “Something we pride ourselves on is being a great unselfish team. Credit to each and every one of these guys for finding us in the spots where we were available.”

Hunter Dickinson led Kansas (16-4, 4-3) with 20 points and 15 rebounds. Kevin McCullar Jr. had 16 points on 5-for-18 shooting, and Johnny Furphy finished with 15.

**No. 3 North Carolina 75, Florida State 68:** RJ Davis scored 24 points and freshman Elliot Cadeau added a season-high 16 as the visiting Tar Heels rallied from an eight-point deficit early in the second half.

Davis surpassed the 20-point mark for the 13th time this season. Cadeau shot 8-for-9 from the free-throw line and had six assists as North Carolina (17-3, 9-0 ACC) extended its winning streak to 10 games.

Primo Spears scored 15 points on 6-for-15 shooting, including 3 of 4 3-pointers, for the Seminoles (12-8, 6-3).

**No. 4 Houston 74, Kansas State 52:** Jamal Shead scored 17 points, J'Wan Roberts had 14 points and six rebounds and the host Cougars extended their winning streak to four games.

Damian Dunn added 13 points for Houston (18-2, 5-2 Big 12), which built a 20-point lead by half-time and won its 17th straight home game. The Cougars converted 18 turnovers into 25 points and held a 28-18 advantage in points in the paint.

Cam Carter scored 16 points and Arthur Kaluma and Dai Dai Ames added 11 apiece for the

Wildcats (14-6, 4-3), which lost their second straight. Kansas State shot 40% and was 7-for-21 from 3-point range.

**No. 5 Tennessee 75, Vanderbilt 62:** Dalton Knecht scored 12 straight points in the second half and finished with 32, rallying the visiting Volunteers past the in-state rival Commodores.

Tennessee trailed by as much as nine in the first half and Vanderbilt, winless in the Southeastern Conference, led 43-39 early in the second half before the Vols rallied.

Santiago Vescovi added 12 points as Tennessee (15-4, 5-1) won its fourth straight and 11th in 12 games. Zakai Zeigler and Jordan Gainey each had 10 points.

**No. 6 Kentucky 63, Arkansas 57:** Antonio Reeves scored 24 points and the visiting Wildcats overcame a sub-par shooting performance to beat the Razorbacks.

Kentucky (15-4, 5-2 Southeastern Conference) took its first lead with 12:54 remaining in the second half when Reed Sheppard (14 points) stole the ball and punctuated a 7-0 run with a dunk. About five minutes later, Reeves picked up a steal-and-slam to put the Wildcats ahead for good, 44-43.

Kentucky missed 10 straight field goals during a stretch in the middle of the first half, allowing Arkansas to take a double-digit lead. The Razorbacks (10-10, 1-6) then went cold as both teams shot 29% from the floor in the opening 20 minutes. The Wildcats shot 36.5% for the game.

**Mississippi State 64, No. 8 Auburn 58:** Josh Hubbard scored 15 of his 17 points in the second half and Cameron Matthews had 14 points and 11 rebounds as the host Bulldogs knocked off the Tigers.

DJ Jeffries made three of four free throws in the final 11 seconds and grabbed 12 rebounds to help seal the win for Mississippi State



MATTHEW PUTNEY/AP

**Iowa State guard Tamin Lipsey gets past Kansas center Hunter Dickinson for an open layup during the second half Saturday in Ames, Iowa. Iowa State won 79-75 to extend its home winning streak to 13 games.**

(14-6, 3-4 SEC). Shakeel Moore scored 12 points and Tolu Smith added nine points and eight rebounds.

Johni Broome scored 14 points and Jaylin Williams added 10 to lead Auburn (16-4, 5-2).

**No. 9 Arizona 87, Oregon 78:** Caleb Love scored a career-high 36 points, and the visiting Wildcats beat the Ducks to snap a three-game road losing streak.

Kylan Boswell added 14 points as Arizona (15-5, 6-3 Pac-12) bounced back after losing 83-80 at Oregon State on Thursday night. Keshad Johnson scored 12 points, and Oumar Ballo had 10 points and nine rebounds.

The Wildcats moved into a tie with Oregon for the top spot in the conference standings.

**No. 10 Illinois 70, Indiana 62:** Terrence Shannon Jr. made six free throws in the final two minutes to help the host Fighting Illini

survive a scare from the Hoosiers.

Indiana tied the game at 62 with 1:29 left on a basket by Mackenzie Mgbako before Illinois scored eight straight points to seal the victory.

Marcus Domask led the Illini (15-5, 6-3 Big Ten) with 16 points and 10 rebounds. Luke Goode and Coleman Hawkins each had 11 points.

**No. 20 Texas Tech 85, No. 11 Oklahoma 84:** Chance McMillian scored 27 points and the visiting Red Raiders rallied from a nine-point deficit in the second half to beat the Sooners.

Pop Isaacs had 18 points, including 13 in the second half for Texas Tech (16-3, 5-1), which shot 52.6% from the field.

Otega Oweh had 14 points and Milos Uzan and Sam Godwin each scored 13 for Oklahoma (15-5, 3-4), which has lost four of its last six games and six of its last eight against Texas Tech.

**No. 12 Duke 72, Clemson 71:** Tyrese Proctor hit two free throws with 1 second left to help the host Blue Devils hang on to beat the Tigers, barely averting the program's first home loss to Clemson in nearly three decades.

With Duke trailing by one, Proctor raced up the court and ran into two defenders near the top of the arc before pushing inside the paint to draw a foul from Josh Beadle. Proctor ended up on the floor and Tigers coach Brad Brownell immediately ripped off his sportscout as he turned back to his bench at the opposite end of the court.

Proctor calmly knocked down both shots for the lead and Clem-

son failed to get off a shot with a desperation inbounds heave for star forward PJ Hall.

**No. 14 Marquette 75, Seton Hall 57:** Oso Ighodaro scored 21 points, David Joplin added 20 and the host Golden Eagles extended their winning streak to four games.

**TCU 105, No. 15 Baylor 102 (30T):** Jameer Nelson Jr. scored a season-high 30 points, including the go-ahead shot with 10 seconds left in the third overtime, and the visiting Horned Frogs rallied to beat the Bears in a Big 12 thriller.

**Richmond 69, No. 16 Dayton 64:** Jordan King scored 15 of his 17 points in the second half as the host Spiders snapped the Flyers' nation-leading 13-game winning streak and moved into sole possession of first place in the Atlantic 10 Conference.

**No. 17 Creighton 85, DePaul 62:** Trey Alexander scored 23 points and Ryan Kalkbrenner had 22 to lead the host Bluejays past the Blue Demons.

**No. 18 Utah State 90, Boise State 84 (OT):** Darius Brown II scored 19 points, Ian Martinez had 18 and the visiting Aggies beat the Broncos in OT for their second straight win.

**No. 21 BYU 84, Texas 72:** Noah Waterman and Jaxson Robinson scored 17 points apiece to lead the host Cougars past the Longhorns.

**Wyoming 79, No. 24 Colorado State 76 (OT):** Mason Walters scored at the buzzer to force overtime and Akuel Kot completed a four-point play in the final minute of the extra period, leading the host Cowboys past the Rams.



MATTHEW PUTNEY/AP

**Iowa State forward Tre King yells out as he heads to the locker room while fans rush the court following a win over Kansas on Saturday.**

## SKIING/MLB

# Top racers crashing at alarming rate

By ANDREW DAMPF  
Associated Press

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy — Mikaela Shiffrin, Aleksander Aamodt Kilde, Petra Vlhova, Alexis Pinturault, Corinne Suter.

All five former overall World Cup ski champions or Olympic gold medalists have been involved in severe crashes during races over the past 15 days.

And they're not the only ones.

Marco Schwarz, a former world champion who was leading the overall standings, didn't even make it to January. He injured his knee on the dark and bumpy Bormio downhill in late December.

In a season without a Winter Olympics or a world championships, the ski circuit is hurting.

Why? Many skiers are pointing to an overloaded schedule in January after many races were canceled at the start of the season.

The International Ski Federation (FIS) scheduled two downhills for the men at Wengen, Switzerland, and Kitzbühel, Austria, and also two for the women in Cortina. Add in multiple training sessions at each of those venues and there's high-speed, on-the-edge skiing going on virtually all week.

"If the strongest skiers are going down, it's got to make you wonder," leading downhiller Sofia Goggia said.

Shiffrin, who has a record 95 World Cup wins, crashed into the safety net at high speed during Friday's downhill in Cortina. She avoided a serious leg injury and wrote on Instagram she was thankful it wasn't worse. It's unclear when Shiffrin will return.

"She's positive and in a certain way relieved," U.S. team coach Paul Kristofic told The Associated Press. "Because it could have been worse. But she's pretty sore, as you are for most speed crashes. But she was quite upbeat about things."

Shiffrin lost control while landing a jump in a patch of soft snow on the upper portion of the Olympia delle Tofane course that will



ALESSANDRO TROVATI/AP

Norway's Aleksander Aamodt Kilde falls during a downhill race in Wengen, Switzerland, on Jan. 13. Kilde suffered a dislocated shoulder and a severe cut and nerve damage in his right calf in the high-speed crash.

be used for the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympics. Then she slammed into the net at high speed.

Medics tended to Shiffrin immediately and she limped off the course with her left boot raised off the snow. As per the protocol in Cortina, Shiffrin was loaded into a helicopter and taken halfway down the mountain to a landing area for further evaluations. Then she was transported by ambulance to a hospital in Cortina.

Suter pulled up midway on her run, clutching her left knee. She tore her ACL, damaged her meniscus and is out for the season. Like Shiffrin, Suter was airlifted down the mountain.

The weekend before, Vlhova's season ended after tearing ligaments in her right knee in a giant slalom in front of her home fans in Slovakia. That came after Pinturault and Kilde had season-ending crashes at Wengen.

"Races, travel, training sessions, pressure, stress," said Federica Brignone, another former



GIOVANNI ZENONI/AP

Italy's Federica Brignone sits up after crashing during a downhill race in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, on Friday. She was not seriously injured.

overall champion who crashed on Friday — although without getting hurt. "It's time to reflect about the overloaded schedule."

"She doesn't fall often," Kristofic said of Shiffrin. "But it can happen. It just goes to show you how on the limit athletes push and and how the courses push them. And

they have to if they want to be competitive."

There were more crashes on Saturday in Cortina, where American racer Bella Wright sustained bruises and a cut on her chin.

"It hurt, but I knew right away my legs were OK," Wright said. "They're bruised and they're defi-

nately going to be more and more sore as time goes on. I was also spitting up blood and I wasn't sure what that was from. And then they told me I have a laceration on my chin."

Racing was suspended several times for long periods due to strong winds.

Germany's Kira Weidle and Switzerland's Joana Haehlen also fell, and Haehlen was carried away from the finish area with her entire leg bandaged. She tore her right ACL.

"Talking only about the number of races is pointless," said Lara Gut-Behrami, the Olympic super-G champion and a former overall winner. "There's a ton of reasons that affect performance. True, the schedule is very full, but it's been that way for years. Even when there are no races all the athletes go train."

"There's more stress because of everything else surrounding the sport," Gut-Behrami added. "Whereas before it was only about skiing, now an athlete has to multitask and worry about curating their image and marketing themselves. But the days still last 24 hours."

## Cut-proof underwear

Considering all of the recent crashes, some skiers are suggesting cut-proof underwear should become mandatory in more races.

Already required in parallel events, the cut-proof underwear could prevent racers from being injured by their super-sharp ski edges during crashes. But downhillers don't wear it because it slows them down.

"This should be a safe improvement for all of us," Goggia said. "It should be mandatory."

Kilde had to have urgent surgery to repair a severe cut and nerve damage in his right calf.

Cut-proof underwear, made of resistant polyethylene substances that are said to be stronger than steel or Kevlar on a per-weight basis, might have prevented Kilde's injury.

# Scherzer, deGrom hopeful for midseason returns

By STEPHEN HAWKINS  
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — The World Series champion Texas Rangers have two Cy Young Award winners who could return to their rotation sometime in the middle of the summer.

Three-time Cy Young winner Max Scherzer said Saturday that he is progressing from December surgery to repair a herniated disk in his lower back, while two-time winner Jacob deGrom plans to resume throwing this spring after elbow surgery that ended his season after six starts.

"When we get us back here, hopefully somewhere around the trade deadline, it's like picking up a couple guys," deGrom said during the team's annual FanFest.



Scherzer



deGrom

Scherzer was a trade-deadline acquisition for the Rangers last summer, and he was 4-2 with a 3.20 ERA in eight starts before missing the last two weeks of the regular season and the first two rounds of the playoffs because of a strained muscle in his right shoulder. He started twice in the AL Championship Series, but then was forced from his start in Game 3 of the World Series after three innings because of back discomfort.

"We won the World Series, so everything's great," Scher-

zer said. "You've got to keep the glass-half-full mentality to this."

The 39-year-old right-hander said he got checked out by doctors right after the season, and an MRI showed a little inflammation in his back. Scherzer said he started feeling better before experiencing nerve pain in his leg, and then twice had epidural injections before another MRI revealed the herniated disk.

Former Mets star deGrom went to Texas last offseason on a \$185 million, five-year deal. He had a 2.67 ERA with 45 strikeouts as the Rangers won all six games he started.

The 35-year-old deGrom said he has started doing a plyometric training program that he will have to complete before he resumes throwing at some point this spring.

# SPORTS



**One win from tying record**  
Oilers match second-longest winning streak in league history » **NHL, Page 20**

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN



ANDY WONG/AP

Italy's Jannik Sinner falls backward onto the court Sunday after winning the men's singles final at the Australian Open. Sinner beat Russia's Daniil Medvedev in five sets.

# Sinner wins his first major



ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE/AP

A disappointed Medvedev congratulates Sinner after the match.

## Rallies from 2 sets down to beat Medvedev

By JOHN PYE  
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Jannik Sinner lined up a forehand, drilled it down the line and dropped to the court on his back, giving himself a few moments to process how he'd come back from two sets down to win his first Grand Slam title.

The 22-year-old Sinner found a way to turn defense into attack in his first major final and take the Australian Open title from Daniil Medvedev 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 on Sunday.

It was his third straight win over a top 5 player, including his quarterfinal win over No. 5 Andrey Rublev and his semifinal upset that ended No. 1 Novak Djokovic's long domination of the tournament. Only Djokovic and Roger Federer have done that in a major played on hard courts.

Sinner is the first Italian to win the Australian Open and the youngest winner in a men's final here since Djokovic won his first Grand Slam title in 2008.

### INSIDE

Sabalenka repeats as champ  
**Page 21**

With Carlos Alcaraz winning Wimbledon and Sinner winning the season-opening major, a generation shift is arriving.

"It's been a hell of a journey," the 22-year-old Sinner said, "even though I'm only 22."

"It's obviously a huge tournament for me. But I want to thank everyone for making this Slam so special."

For 2021 U.S. Open champion Medvedev, the loss was his fifth in six major finals. The third-seeded Medvedev set a record with his fourth five-set match of the tournament and time on court at a major in the Open era, his 24 hours and 17 minutes surpassing

**SEE FIRST ON PAGE 21**

## World's top skiers crashing at alarming rate » Page 23

