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STARS AND STRIPES

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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Army unveils new parental leave policy

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Army on Tuesday expanded its Congress-mandated parental leave policy, granting 12 weeks of leave after welcoming a new child to all soldiers regardless of gender.

The Army was the last of the military services to implement the new policy in recent weeks, after the Defense Department rolled out its guidelines Jan. 4. Congress in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets its annual priorities for the Pentagon, had mandated the armed forces adopt a 12-week parental leave policy by Jan. 1 — a target all the services missed.

Like the other services, however, the Army backdated its policy to cover soldiers who have welcomed a new child or had unused parental leave as of Dec. 27. The Marine Corps rolled out its new policy on Monday, and the Navy unveiled its on Jan. 19. The Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard announced their new parental leave policies on Jan. 5.

In a Twitter statement, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth wrote Tuesday that she was excited to roll out the new policy, which defense officials believe could bolster morale among military parents.

"The [Army] recruits soldiers, but retains families," she tweeted.

The Army policy instructs commanders to authorize new moth-

SEE LEAVE ON PAGE 5

12

The number of weeks of parental leave granted after welcoming a child to all soldiers regardless of gender.



ERIC COFFER/U.S. Navy

Sailors paint the side of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter on March 11 during regularly scheduled maintenance.

Dogged by delays

Navy's ships spend less time at sea amid persistent maintenance setbacks, report says

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy's warships have been spending less time at sea and more time under costly and lengthy repairs since 2011, according to a government watchdog report released Tuesday.

A review of 151 surface war-

ships by the Government Accountability Office showed worsening maintenance delays, more breakdowns requiring repairs and a rising number of working ship parts removed and used elsewhere due to parts shortages in the industry supply chain.

"We have made dozens of recommendations to address these issues, but the Navy has yet to fully implement them all," the agency

wrote.

Navy officials argued in the report that a decrease in time at sea is not necessarily bad and does not always reflect a ship's inability to perform its mission. They also explained the allocation of "steaming hours," or a ship's hours at sea, is driven by budgetary concerns and the cost of fuel.

But the Government Accounta-

bility Office said persistent ship sustainment issues have prevented the Navy from reaping the full benefit of its forces and contributed to significant readiness challenges during the past decade.

Congressional lawmakers have pressed the service to build a fleet powerful enough to counter China

SEE DELAYS ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Commerce report claims app stores are 'harmful'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is taking aim at Apple and Google for operating mobile app stores that it says stifle competition.

The finding is contained in a Commerce Department report being released by the administration on Wednesday as President Joe Biden convenes his competition council for an update on efforts to promote competition and lower prices.

The report from the depart-

ment's National Telecommunications and Information Administration says the current app store model is "harmful to consumers and developers" by inflating prices and reducing innovation. The firms have a stranglehold on the market that squelches competition, it adds.

"The policies that Apple and Google have in place in their own mobile app stores have created unnecessary barriers and costs for app developers, ranging from fees for access to functional re-

strictions that favor some apps over others" the report said.

In an op-ed in The Wall Street Journal in January, Biden called on Democrats and Republicans to rein in large tech firms without mentioning Apple or Google by name.

"When tech platforms get big enough, many find ways to promote their own products while excluding or disadvantaging competitors—or charge competitors a fortune to sell on their platform," Biden said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		South Korea (Won)	
Euro costs (Feb. 2)	\$1.06	Switzerland (Franc)	1,229.26
Dollar buys (Feb. 2)	0.8937	Thailand (Baht)	.9169
British pound (Feb. 2)	\$1.20	Turkey (New Lira)	32.91
Japanese yen (Feb. 2)	127.00		18.8129
South Korean won (Feb. 2)	1,200.00		

(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.)

Commercial rates		INTEREST RATES	
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3769	Prime rate	7.50
Britain (Pound)	1.2321	Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00
Canada (Dollar)	1.3295	Federal funds market rate	4.33
China (Yuan)	6.7402	3-month bill	4.70
Denmark (Krone)	6.8299	30-year bond	3.64
Egypt (Pound)	30.1987		
Euro	1.0890		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8429		
Hungary (Forint)	358.62		
Israel (Shekel)	3.4546		
Japan (Yen)	129.37		
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3051		
Norway (Krone)	9.9810		
Philippines (Peso)	54.37		
Poland (Zloty)	4.32		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7524		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3119		

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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PACIFIC

2021 DOD civilian death shows health care issues

Family faced multiple roadblocks to get off-base care in Japan

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Andrew Hakun, 52, a Navy veteran and father of two boys, died in February 2021 after a long, agonizing wait for surgery following a heart attack at this base in western Tokyo, according to his widow and medical records.

Nearly two years later, Hakun's death is one example that Defense Department civilian employees raise when they talk about losing access to medical care at U.S. military bases in Japan. Not that Yokota's 374th Medical Group could have saved his life, but that access to medical care at Japanese hospitals and clinics is unpredictable, they say.

U.S. military personnel in Japan "are living in a country with excellent health care service if you can get to it," his widow, Cathy Hakun, 57, of Woodbine, Md., told Stars and Stripes by phone Friday. "Anybody on that base who has to go through urgent care is running an unsurvivable risk."

The Defense Health Agency, under a congressional mandate, imposed limits effective Jan. 1 on DOD civilian employees' access to most health care at military bases in the Indo-Pacific region. Appointments for immediate medical needs are available only after active-duty service members, their families and other higher-priority individuals are scheduled.

Urgent care and some other services, such as labor and delivery and exams for employment and sports, are still available. Health

care at military hospitals in Japan is reserved for those covered by Tri-care Prime, the top tier of the military health care plan.

The director of DHA's Indo-Pacific region, Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Heck, in October advised DOD civilians in Japan to look for health care providers in the communities around U.S. military bases.

During recent town hall meetings, critics of the DHA changes said health care for DOD civilians in Japan has always been hit or miss, that providers can refuse service and often require large, upfront payments for care.

Consequently, DOD civilians working on U.S. bases in Japan risk delayed medical treatment that could prove fatal, Cathy Hakun said. Her husband's death is a case in point, she said.

Ten tries

The couple, both civilian employees for the Department of Defense Special Representative in Japan, were on their second assignment to Yokota when Andrew Hakun awoke in distress at their on-base apartment, prompting his wife to call 911 shortly after midnight on Feb. 18, 2021, his widow said.

An ambulance arrived within 15 minutes, she said, but her husband was held at Yokota's urgent care clinic until 4:28 a.m. while attempts were made to transfer him to an off-base hospital, according to his medical records.

Calls were placed to more than 10 nearby hospitals before finding one in Hachioji, 7 miles from Yokota,

that would accept him, according to his records.

Andrew Hakun arrived just after 5 a.m. in Hachioji, where Japanese doctors diagnosed him with papillary muscle rupture, acute myocardial infarction and cardiogenic pulmonary edema, according to his records. He required emergency heart surgery that could not be performed in Hachioji, the records state.

Hakun went next to a hospital in Shinjuku, about 25 miles from Hachioji, but doctors there discovered severe brain damage due to the heart attack, according to the records, and his family was told heart surgery was no longer an option. He died two days later, his wife said.

COVID complications

The COVID-19 pandemic, at the time still infecting more than 15,000 people in Tokyo every day, factored into her husband's death, Cathy Hakun said. He first called Yokota's hospital on Jan. 28, 2021, complaining of breathing pain. He was instructed to report to a tent outside the hospital for a COVID-19 test rather than come to the urgent care clinic, she said.

"The No. 1 time a man over 50 has a heart attack is in the morning and pain breathing is a sign of a heart attack," she said.

Persistent chest pain or pressure may be an early warning sign of a heart attack, according to the Mayo Clinic website. Most heart attacks occur between 6 a.m. and noon, according to WebMD.

After testing negative for COVID-19, Andrew Hakun on Jan. 30,



Cathy Hakun

Andrew and Cathy Hakun pose with their sons Steven, left, and Patrick, and their dog, Wooffulls, in Woodbine, Md., Aug. 8, 2017.

2021, consulted by phone with a Yokota doctor who suggested he come for an in-person checkup; but he decided against it, his wife said.

Thinking back on what happened Feb. 18, she said she should have driven her husband directly to an off-base hospital. He might have received more advanced treatment, faster, she said.

At Yokota's urgent care clinic, Andrew Hakun was "in full blown cardiac arrest," his widow said. The staff provided him with aspirin and oxygen and watched, she said.

"They knew it was a heart attack," she said. "I felt bad for the uniformed medical personnel there. All they could do was watch him suffer."

Urgent care

Military urgent care centers aren't typically as well equipped as hospital emergency departments, according to 1st Lt. Danny Rangel, a spokesman for Yokota's 374th Airlift Wing.

The urgent care staff "are trained and prepared to provide stabilizing cardiac life support to our beneficiaries," he told Stars and Stripes in an email Aug. 12.

"When medical cases exceed our capabilities, or the patient would otherwise benefit from a higher level of care, medical personnel work

with various Japanese medical facilities to facilitate that care," Rangel said. "The health and safety of our patients is our top priority, and the 374th Medical Group will continue to make every effort to provide the best possible care for all members and beneficiaries."

Rangel said transportation time for emergency patients to a Japanese facility can vary according to the patient's condition. Other delays may result when local hospitals are full, a common occurrence during peak periods of the pandemic, he said.

"Our medical staff works with off base facilities to provide the most appropriate and prompt care available in the Tokyo metropolitan area," he said.

Air Force regulations preclude Yokota's medical group from disclosing the results of investigations it's required to undertake when patients are harmed, Rangel said.

"Accordingly, we cannot comment on any specific case, but please know that the 374th Medical Group works tirelessly both internally and with our host nation partners to ensure the best possible outcomes for all patients in our care," he said.

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Okinawa-based airman accused of theft also a suspect in arson probe



KEISHI KOJA/Stars and Stripes

A tool shed atop the roof of a building in Chatan, Okinawa, was damaged by a fire on Jan. 15.

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A U.S. airman on Okinawa accused of stealing the equivalent of \$8 from a vehicle in mid-January is also suspected of starting a tool shed fire the same night, a Japanese police spokesman said Tuesday.

Staff Sgt. Mason Laubach, 27, of Kadena Air Base, has been in Okinawa city police custody since his arrest at 7:54 a.m. Jan. 15, after a Chatan resident alleged Laubach took 1,000 yen from a vehicle, a spokesman for Okinawa prefectural police told Stars and Stripes by phone.

On Jan. 16, police forwarded a theft charge against Laubach to the Naha District Prosecutors Office,

according to a spokeswoman there. She said police added an illegal entry charge on Monday that alleges Laubach had entered a two-story building a quarter-mile from the theft scene.

Prosecutors have yet to indict Laubach on any charge.

Laubach, still in jail, was also formally rearrested Monday on suspicion of illegal entry. Rearresting Laubach on a separate charge permits police to hold and interrogate him another 10 to 20 days.

Officers found items belonging to Laubach on the building's roof, where a tool shed burned down that night, according to the city police spokesman. He said the fire is still under investigation.

The tools and drills inside the shed were a near total loss, a Nirai Fire Department spokesman said

Wednesday.

Government spokespeople in Japan are routinely required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

A Breathalyzer test on Jan. 15 measured Laubach's blood-alcohol content at 0.12%, four times Japan's legal driving limit of 0.03%, the city police spokesman said.

Roughly 30 minutes before police received the theft report, the Nirai Fire Department responded to a possible fire in the same area, the fire department spokesman said. He said a witness reported lots of smoke and someone fleeing the area. The fire was out by 7:14 a.m.

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MILITARY

Biden orders military pay, benefits review

By DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Tuesday directed the Pentagon to begin reviewing military pay and benefits to make certain service members are being paid fairly and can afford basic needs such as food and housing.

The study — known as the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation — is conducted every four years to examine whether military pay and other benefits are suitable. Its goal is to make sure service members are being paid comparatively to what they would see in the civilian market and can afford necessities. The review is Biden's first as president.

"Our great nation has the finest fighting force in the world and it remains our sacred obligation to take care of our men and women in uniform," Biden wrote in a memo ordering the review. "Our service members deserve a 21st century military compensation system that recognizes and rewards their contributions, reflects the values of our nation, and incentivizes the next generation of men and women to serve."

The president outlined five areas of focus for the review:

- Compensation and benefits, including special pay, to ensure the Pentagon is "appropriately" paying service members, while also being responsible with taxpayer money.

- The basic pay table to ensure

it strengthens "economic security" for troops, improving the Pentagon's ability to recruit and retain service members.

- Compensation as it relates to future requirements in technology and other defense-critical fields.

- Formulas that are used to calculate the costs of housing, food and other necessities and cost-of-living allowances — including the military's new Basic Needs Allowance — to make certain troops are food secure and able to afford suitable housing.

- Evaluate the military's benchmark for compensation to learn how a shift toward dual-income households and other income factors might warrant foundational changes, including military spouse unemployment, frequent moves and the cost of child care.

The Basic Needs Allowance is a supplemental payment given to active-duty troops who have dependents and a gross income below 130% of federal poverty guidelines. The allowance was authorized last year by Congress and the first payments started going out this month. Troops can inquire about eligibility, but officials said each of the military services will proactively screen and notify troops who qualify for the supplemental income.

The order for the new pay and benefits review comes just weeks after the Pentagon announced the



MARCUS BULLOCK/U.S. Air Force

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden meet with service members at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., in 2021. Tuesday, the president directed the Pentagon to review military pay and benefits as part of the quadrennial review.

largest year-to-year increases in food and housing allowances in decades. The department said food allowances would increase 11% for 2023 and housing payments by an average of 12%.

The study will be the first since research in the past couple of years has found military families to be experiencing hunger disproportionately compared to nonmilitary families — something the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, views as a national security concern.

A 2019 survey by the U.S. Army Public Health Center and U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, for example, found 33% of 5,600 respondents at one military installation were marginally food insecure. For comparison, the Agriculture Department found among all U.S. households it is 18%.

In 2020, a Blue Star Families survey found 14% of about 4,500 enlisted active-duty family respondents reported low or very

low food security, compared to 10.5% of all U.S. households, according to USDA data. Further, the Rand Corp. reported this month that roughly 25% of active-duty service members lack sufficient access to food, adding personnel and people who live on-base are especially at risk.

"The higher rate of food insecurity among military personnel is surprising and needs to be better understood," according to the report by Rand, a California-based think tank.

In late 2021, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin voiced concern about hunger in military homes when he announced several moves to help troops and families who said they were fiscally compromised by the coronavirus pandemic. He also temporarily raised the housing allowance in more expensive areas and extended reimbursements for relocation expenses to areas with housing shortages.

"Those who have served our country shouldn't struggle to put food on the table or keep a roof

over their head," Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif., a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a tweet last month. "I will keep fighting to expand the Basic Needs Allowance so our service members can make ends meet."

In calling for the review, Biden underscored military pay and benefits have a significant effect on recruiting. Each of the services have voiced concerns with recruiting difficulties in recent years — partly because fewer than 25% of young Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 qualify physically and academically to serve in the armed forces, according to Pentagon data. Previous compensation reviews have led to significant changes in military pay and benefits, such as raising hazard pay and using different criteria to calculate the housing allowance. Biden ordered the review to begin immediately and be finished by January 2025.

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Police look to charge Marine suspected of crashing stolen car

By HANA KUSUMOTO
AND JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — Police in Iwakuni city on Monday recommended Japanese prosecutors charge a Marine there with drunken driving, theft and other offenses stemming from an incident in December, a police spokesman said Tuesday.

Police allege the unnamed 20-year-old man broke into a local dealership, stole a car and crashed it into another vehicle, leaving its occupants with minor injuries, the spokesman said by phone. Government spokespeople in Japan are often required to speak to the media only on the condition of anonymity.



ALL NIPPON NEWS

This screenshot from an All Nippon News report shows camera footage from a car dealer in Iwakuni, Japan, on Dec. 3.

Police identified the accused only as a 20-year-old male, but Iwakuni city has said a Marine working at the base was suspected in the incident.

A spokesman for MCAS Iwakuni, near Hiroshima, declined to identify the Marine unless he's indicted.

"We can confirm that a service member is accused of various violations of Japanese law," Maj. Gerard Farao told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday. "We, unfortunately, cannot share additional information while the Japanese legal process is ongoing."

Police say the Marine broke into the dealership while intoxicated around 7:14 a.m. Dec. 3, drove away in a car worth about \$41,000, and rear-ended another vehicle at an intersection in Asahi machi. The other driver and a passenger suffered minor injuries, including a sprained neck, the police spokesman said.

The Marine left the accident scene without reporting it to police, according to the spokesman.

The Marine spent nearly two hours with the owner of the stolen car on Thursday, the local Chugoku newspaper reported the next day. In addition to apologizing, he promised to pay for any damages, the report said.

"The service member and his command are fully committed to cooperating with Japanese authorities," Farao said.

Police referred the Marine to the Yamaguchi District Prosecutors Office in Iwakuni and recommended charges of intrusion upon a structure, theft, negligent driving resulting in injuries, drinking and driving and failing to report the accident, the police spokes-

man said.

Police also recommended the Marine be "severely punished," the spokesman said.

"We take all criminal allegations seriously and will evaluate further appropriate actions after all Japanese legal proceedings have concluded," Farao said. "We understand that this case is of significant interest to our Japanese hosts and neighbors, we will make every effort within our legal limits to keep the public informed as soon as information becomes releasable, which is after the formal indictment of the service member by the Japanese authorities."

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MILITARY

New repellent combats mosquitoes for month

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

American troops may be better-protected in the field from the ravages of mosquitoes thanks to some Gator aid.

Scientists at the University of Florida developed a device for the military that can ward off the insects for an entire month.

The device is a plastic tube about an inch long that slowly releases transfluthrin, a bug repellent that the Florida research team said is safe.

"It doesn't stop with mosquitoes," researcher Nagarajan Ra-

jagopal said in a university statement last week. "We want to show that it will work with other insects, especially ticks, which pose a threat by causing Lyme disease."

The research was funded by a grant from the Pentagon's Deployed Warfighter Protection program.

The military spends millions of dollars to protect troops from mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue virus, Zika and the West Nile virus.

New and improved solutions are needed because the list of safe

and cost-effective bug killers is shrinking, a government website on the Deployed Warfighter Protection program said.

The Florida research team wanted a device that doesn't spray pesticide across an open area because dispersal poses a contamination risk to surrounding plants or bodies of water.

Over four weeks in 2021, they placed 70 tubes attached to fishing line at the opening of a large military tent, said a paper published in the January issue of Current Research in Parasitology and Vector-Borne Diseases.

They then released mosquitoes around the tent and measured how many entered.

The transfluthrin is a "heavier-than-air molecule" that was slowly dispensed from the devices to permeate the tent, the study's authors said.

It "created a protected space where mosquito numbers were greatly reduced and minimized or eliminated," the scientists wrote, adding that the few mosquitoes that made it into the tent were unable to fly and thus were easily captured.

Future research will investi-

gate whether the product would protect a space from mosquitoes for up to three months, Rajagopal said in the University of Florida statement.

U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists involved in the study believe the work can help military personnel and civilians alike.

The device "has potential for other applications, including for hiking and fishing," Daniel Kline, a research entomologist for the agency, said in the statement.

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Leave: Request can only be denied if affects unit's combat readiness

FROM PAGE 1

ers and fathers the full 12 weeks of leave after the birth of their child, an adoption or the placement of a minor child for long-term foster care, according to guidelines published by Army Human Resources Command. The policy replaces the Army's most recent parental leave policy that granted six weeks of maternity leave to birth mothers and three weeks of leave to secondary caregivers, such as fathers or other non-birth partners.

For birth parents, the 12-week parental leave period would follow convalescent leave to recover from childbirth ordered by a doctor, according to HRC.

The Army's policy largely mirrors those unveiled by the other military services, including the Marines' policy. While Marine officials said their policy was delayed until after the Navy could publish its new policy, Army officials did not immediately explain the reason for its delay.

The Army's policy does have one significant difference from those rolled out by the other services. The other services' policies — including the Marines' — largely allowed commanders to deny leave under certain circumstances, though the Army policy allows "only the first general officer in a soldier's chain of command" to disapprove a parental leave request, according to the service.

Human Resources Command wrote parental leave should only be denied for significant events that would impact a unit's combat readiness, such as a "critical deployment" or a "critical training event." It wrote soldiers denied parental leave must later be granted that leave. Soldiers have up to one year after birth or adoption to use their 12 weeks of leave, which can be taken in a single block or in shorter increments, according to the policy.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston, the service's top enlisted soldier, tweeted Tuesday soldiers should work with their chains of command early to develop their leave plans to ensure it "balances both the needs of the



MICAH MERRILL/U.S. Army

Army Spc. Dallas Ochoa reunites with his daughter, Kaylynn, following a homecoming ceremony at Fort Carson, Colo., in 2018.

soldier and the needs of the unit.

"Work with your leaders to communicate your intent and plan as early as possible," Grinston wrote. "This should not impact

[combat] readiness if we prepare."

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Delays: Cannibalization of working ship parts adds to workload, costs

FROM PAGE 1

as it expands its influence in the Indo-Pacific region and eyes a possible invasion of Taiwan. China's navy is now the largest in the world, according to the Pentagon, while the U.S. Navy's 293-vessel fleet falls short of the 350-ship force desired by some of the lawmakers.

Navy officials told the GAO that significant maintenance backlogs influenced their decision last year to seek the recommissioning of nine ships before the end of their service life. Congress has routinely stepped in to prevent certain early vessel retirements, most recently the guided-missile cruiser USS Vicksburg.

"Congress is willing to build more ships than the Navy," Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., wrote in an editorial last year. Wittman was named vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee last week.

Maintenance delays per ship have multiplied since 2011, increasing from five days on average to an average of 19 days in 2021. Maintenance costs grew by \$1.2 billion during the same period, according to the report.

Navy officials said growth in the magnitude of previously planned work and the discovery of the need for new work caused maintenance delays for all nine surface ship classes reviewed by the agency.

The Navy spent about \$17 billion during fiscal 2020 to operate and sustain the 10 ship classes assessed in the report, a \$2.5 billion increase from fiscal 2011. The selected ship classes represent about half of the Navy's ship battle force.

Though the Navy has added 33 ships to those classes since 2011, the number of hours at sea declined and became more expensive, according to the report.

The GAO said the service's growing reliance on pulling work-

ing parts from ships for installation in ships under repair contributed to the higher costs. Cannibalization of parts increases workloads, lowers morale and takes expensive weapons systems out of service for long periods of time, according to the report.

The Arleigh Burke-class of destroyers saw seven more cannibalizations per ship in fiscal 2022 than in fiscal 2011. The 68 ships in the class also had 19 more serious failure reports per ship than a decade ago, according to the report. Maintenance costs increased by \$661 million for the Arleigh Burke class.

Analysts with the Government Accountability Office said the Navy has generally agreed with their recommendations to improve ship sustainment but is failing to fully or accurately track operational and materiel availability. The Navy also needs to establish measures to manage depot maintenance backlogs, better track data

on maintenance periods and take steps to ensure new ships are reliable, the agency wrote.

Tribune News Service reported that the GAO's report dovetails with views of the admiral responsible for providing combat-ready vessels. Shipyard maintenance and new construction delays are "the most significant problem the Navy faces," Adm. Daryl Caudle said in an emailed statement.

Caudle this month criticized Navy contractors for late deliver-

ies of the service's primary air-defense weapon, the SM-6 missile that's made by Raytheon, as well as the MK-48 heavyweight torpedo made by Lockheed Martin.

"I need SM-6 missiles delivered on time," he said in the email, pledging to sit down with defense contractors to discuss the problem next month. "I need Mk-48 torpedoes delivered on time."

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PACIFIC

US, Japan take a leap near Mount Fuji

BY KELLY AGEE
AND JEREMY STILLWAGNER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — U.S. airmen and Japanese soldiers gathered recently at this airlift hub in western Tokyo to stuff sand, rocks and water into wooden crates ahead of an annual jump by hundreds of airborne troops from both nations.

A week before the jumps on Tuesday and Wednesday, the U.S. and Japanese troops met in a logistics warehouse at Yokota, home of the 374th Airlift Wing. There, they filled the boxes to simulate supply bundles of 501 to 2,200 pounds, Airman 1st Class Izaiah Dillion, combat mobility operations technician for 374th Logistics Readiness Squadron Combat Mobility Flight, told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

The airdrop and airborne jump is an annual event, but the 100 bundles were assembled for the first time in the logistics squadron's warehouse. Squadron airmen were joined by members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

"It strengthens our relationships with our Japanese forces," said Tech. Sgt. Cassandra Benson, a section chief with the squadron.

"We also teach each other things," said Benson, 38, of Waverly, Tenn. "When we work with other countries like this, we just get to see how they do things. They might have a better idea; if they do, we can adapt and make it better."

The annual exercise, dubbed Airborne 2023, brings more than 500 Japanese and U.S. troops together to train as one force. They flew onto nine Air Force C-130J Super Hercules airlifters each day for the 45-minute flight to Higashifuji Training Field in the Mount Fuji foothills, where the cargo bundles and the paratroopers were dropped together.

"The goal is to practice our interoperability with the JGSDF and work on our partnership with



YASUO OSAKABE/U.S. Air Force

Japan Ground Self-Defense Force paratroopers assigned to the 1st Airborne Brigade descend from an Air Force C-130J Super Hercules over the East Fuji Maneuver Area, Japan, on Tuesday.

our partner and allied nation," Capt. Jeffrey Lewoczko, a Super Hercules pilot with the 36th Airlift Squadron and mission commander for Airborne 2023, told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

The U.S. military often uses "interoperability" to describe the ability of a country's armed forces to use another's training methods and military equipment.

The exercise came two weeks after the U.S. secretaries of defense and state met their Japanese counterparts in Washington, D.C., where they pledged deeper military cooperation in the face of increasing security threats from China and North Korea.



PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

C-130J Super Hercules aircraft assigned to the 36th and 327th Airlift Squadrons prepare to take off at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Tuesday.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the enhanced agreements reflect the "ironclad commitment" by the United States to defend Japan with all its capabilities, including nuclear weapons, and counter China's "destabilizing actions" in the region.

Taking part in the exercise this week were Japan's 1st Airborne Brigade, the Air Force 36th Airlift Squadron, 374th Maintenance Group, 374th Logistics Readiness Squadron Combat Mobility Flight and 374th Operations Support Squadron from Yokota and the 327th Airlift Squadron from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.

Lewoczko, of Medina, Tenn., said Airborne 2023 for him is a special event because it was his first exercise at Yokota. He piloted a Super Hercules in formation during last year's drop.

"It's a lot of work but very re-



Paratroopers from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force prepare their gear at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

warding," he said. "Getting to work closely with our partners in the JGSDF is exceptionally educating for me, getting to see how they approached their planning process and being able to fully in-

tegrate that with the US planning process it's very important."

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Paratroopers from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force prepare their gear at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

EUROPE

Russia mulling eastern Ukraine push

Zelenskyy looks to crack down on corruption

BY SUSIE BLANN
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia is mustering its military might in the Luhansk region of Ukraine, officials said Wednesday, in what Kyiv suspects is preparation for an offensive in the coming weeks as the first anniversary of Moscow's invasion approaches.

Also Wednesday, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government continued its crackdown on alleged corruption. The government dismissed several high-ranking officials, prominent lawmaker David Arakhamia said.

Zelenskyy was elected in 2019 on an anti-establishment and anti-corruption platform in a country long gripped by graft, and the new allegations come as Western allies are channeling billions of dollars to help Kyiv fight Moscow and as his government is introducing reforms so it can potentially join the European Union one day.

On the battlefield, the Kremlin's forces are expelling residents near the Russian-held parts of the front line so they can't provide information about Russian troop deployments to Ukrainian artillery forces, Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said.

"There is an active transfer of (Russian troops) to the region and they are definitely preparing for something on the eastern front in February," Haidai said.

The Institute for the Study of War said late Tuesday that "an imminent Russian offensive in the coming months is the most likely course of action."

A new offensive might coincide with the invasion anniversary on Feb. 24.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported Wednesday that Russia is also concentrating its efforts in neighboring Donetsk province, especially in its bid to capture the key city of Bakhmut.

Donetsk and Luhansk provinces make up the Donbas, an industrial region bordering Russia that President Vladimir Putin identified as a goal for takeover from the war's outset and where Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces since 2014.

Russian shelling of Bakhmut, from which most residents have fled while others spend much of their time in cellars, killed at least five civilians and wounded 10 on Tuesday, Ukraine's presidential office said Wednesday.

The regional governor of Do-



CHRISTOPHE ENA/AP

Ukrainian Minister of Defense Oleksii Reznikov, right, receives a small model of a Ground Master 200 radar after signing an agreement with French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecomu and Chairman and CEO of Thales Group Patrice Caine, left, during a visit at Thales radar factory in Limours, south west of Paris, France, on Wednesday.

netsk, Pavlo Kyrylenko, posted images of the aftermath of the shelling, showing huge black holes in residential buildings in the embattled city. He said Russia is "actively deploying new military personnel to the region."

Donetsk was one of four provinces that Russia illegally annexed in the fall, but controls only about half of it. To take the remaining half, Russian forces have no choice but to go through Bakhmut, the only approach to bigger Ukrainian-held cities.

Russian forces have been trying for months to capture Bakhmut. Moscow-installed authorities in Donetsk claimed Russian troops are "closing the ring" around the city.

But the Wagner Group, a Kremlin-controlled paramilitary group headed by businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin, on Wednesday denied that Bakhmut was encircled. "When the city is taken, you will certainly know about it," Prigozhin added in an online post.

Ukraine is keen to secure more Western military aid to fend off the much larger Russian forces. It has already won pledges of tanks and now wants more.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described media reports about new U.S. military assistance to Ukraine expected to be announced soon as "a direct path to

inciting tensions and taking the escalation to a new level."

"It will require additional efforts on our part, but it won't change the course of events," he said in a conference call with reporters.

The Western allies are trying to broaden their coalition in support of Ukraine. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday in Tokyo that he sought stronger cooperation and more "friends" for the alliance in the Indo-Pacific region.

In other developments Wednesday:

■ Arakhamia, the head of the parliamentary faction of Ukraine's Servant of the People party to which Zelenskyy belongs, said several senior officials were targeted in the government's anti-corruption drive. Among those dismissed were Yuri Sotnik, who served as First Deputy Chairman of the State Forest Agency; Alexander Shchutsky, First Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Service; and Andrei Lordkipanidze, Deputy Chairman of the State Service for Food Safety and Consumer Protection, Arakhamia said.

In addition, the deputy head of the customs service, Ruslan Cherkassky, has been suspended, according to Arakhamia.

■ Ukraine's anti-corruption

drive is expected to be on the agenda when the European Union's two top officials, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Council President Charles Michel, meet with Zelenskyy on Friday. Ukraine's long road toward potential membership of the EU will be a key issue under discussion, with stamping out corruption a key condition of membership.

■ The presidents of Bulgaria and Serbia launched construction of the Bulgarian part of a gas link designed to diversify the energy supplies of a region that until recently was almost fully dependent on natural gas deliveries from Russia.

■ Authorities in Russia's western Bryansk province, which borders Ukraine, reported power outages after a Ukrainian rocket allegedly fell near an oil pumping station. No one was reported hurt. Putin met with officials to discuss alleviating damage from such cross-border attacks on Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions bordering Ukraine. Putin said "the priority task is to liquidate the possibility of shelling," repair damaged buildings and infrastructure, and compensate residents. Ukrainian officials have kept mum about most cross-border attacks, but emphasized their right to strike Russian territory.

Turkish leader: Quran-burning means Sweden can't join NATO

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reaffirmed Wednesday that Turkey won't allow Sweden to join the NATO military alliance as long as the Scandinavian country permits protests desecrating Islam's holy book to take place.

Turkey, which has been holding off approving Sweden and Finland's membership in the Western military alliance, has been infuriated by a series of demonstrations in Stockholm by activists who have burned the Quran outside the Turkish Embassy and hanged an effigy of Erdogan.

It has indefinitely postponed a key meeting in Brussels that would have discussed the two Nordic countries' entry into NATO.

"Sweden, don't even bother! As long as you allow my holy book, the Quran, to be burned and torn, and you do so together with your security forces, we will not say 'yes' to your entry into NATO," Erdogan said in a speech to his ruling party's legislators.

Swedish government officials have distanced themselves from the protests, including by a far-right anti-Islam activist who burned copies of the Quran in Stockholm and Copenhagen, Denmark, while also stressing that the demonstrations are protected by freedom of speech.

On Tuesday, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson denounced the activists who carried out the demonstrations as "useful idiots" for foreign powers who want to inflict harm on the Scandinavian country as it seeks to join NATO.

"We have seen how foreign actors, even state actors, have used these manifestations to inflame the situation in a way that is directly harmful to Swedish security," Kristersson told reporters in Stockholm, without naming any countries.

Sweden and neighboring Finland abandoned decades of non-alignment and applied to join NATO in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

All NATO members except Turkey and Hungary have ratified their accession, but unanimity is required.

Earlier on Wednesday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Ankara has fewer problems with Finland becoming NATO member than with its neighbor Sweden.

He stressed, however, that it was up to the military alliance to decide whether to accept one country only or the Nordic duo together — something that both countries are committed to.

NATION

Biden lawyer: FBI finds no docs at beach house

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI searched President Joe Biden's vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Del., on Wednesday without finding any classified documents, the president's attorney said. Agents did take some handwritten notes and other materials relating to Biden's time as vice president for review.

The search, disclosed by Biden's personal lawyer, was the latest discomfiting moment for a president who has sought to contrast his sensitivity to rule-following with that of his predecessor Donald Trump, who faces a criminal investigation into his handling of classified documents. Wednesday's search, the third for a Biden home or office, shows that an investigation that had simmered quietly for weeks was continuing rather than fading away as Biden, who has said he was surprised by an earlier records discovery, presumably hoped.

The attorney, Bob Bauer, said FBI agents spent three and a half hours searching the home and that, "No documents with classified markings were found."

Biden's attorneys revealed last month that they had undertaken their search of the home without turning up classified materials. The fact the FBI did its own search reflected the Justice Department's determination to retrieve any and all possible classified items rather than rely on assurances that such documents had been located.

Bauer described the search as "planned" and "a further step in a thorough and timely DOJ process we will continue to fully support and facilitate."

He did not mention Trump by name, but the statement seemed aimed at juxtaposing the Biden investigation with the Trump case, where months of fruitless Justice Department efforts to recover all the classified records taken to the former president's Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago, culminated in an August search warrant and the removal of roughly three dozen boxes of documents and other items.

Searches of Biden's former office and Delaware homes, by contrast, have all been done voluntarily and without a warrant.

The latest search follows the FBI's 13-hour, top-to-bottom check of his Wilmington, Del., home, where agents located documents with classified markings from his time as a vice president and senator and also took possession of some of his handwritten notes.

One week earlier, Biden's personal lawyers revealed that they had found a document bearing classified markings while searching the Wilmington property but said they had not found others during a separate inspection of the Rehoboth Beach home.

The White House did not disclose the Justice Department's investigation until last month, when it acknowledged the Nov. 2 discovery of a "small number" of classified documents by Biden lawyers as they closed an office at the Penn Biden Center, a think tank affiliated with the Ivy League school.

Though officials did not say so at the time, The Associated Press and other news organizations reported on Tuesday that the FBI had conducted a voluntary search of that office later that month.



SHANNON McNAUGHT, DELAWARE NEWS JOURNAL/AP

U.S. Secret Service agents are seen in front of President Joe Biden's Rehoboth Beach, Del., home in 2021. The FBI searched the home Wednesday as part of its investigation into the potential mishandling of classified documents, the president's personal lawyer said.

The Justice Department declined comment on the Wednesday search.

Biden's lawyers have described the retention of the records as a "mistake." The Justice Department has historically brought criminal charges related to mishandling of

classified records only when it can establish, among other things, that a person acted knowingly in improperly removing or storing sensitive records.

The Bidens purchased their Rehoboth Beach home in June 2017.

Winter storm causes 3rd day of icy conditions

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Dangerous road conditions from bands of sleet and snow were blamed for six deaths as a winter storm snarled traffic across parts of the nation's midsection, forced the cancellation of flights and left hundreds of thousands without power Wednesday in several Southern states.

Watches and warnings stretched from Texas to Tennessee and Mississippi. Several rounds of mixed precipitation, including freezing rain and sleet, were in store for many areas throughout the day, meaning some regions could be hit multiple times, forecasters said.

"It actually looks like it's going to be getting worse again across Texas, it is already a pretty big area of freezing rain across western and southwestern Texas," according to National Weather Service lead forecaster Bob Oravec in Camp Springs, Md.

Oravec said the winter weather is expected to move northeastward across parts of Oklahoma and Arkansas into western Tennessee and northern Mississippi, before starting to end.

"By later in the day on Thursday it should be pretty much done and all the ... precipitation will be well downstream across parts of the South and where it will be mostly heavy rain," Oravec said.

More than 1,900 flights scheduled for Wednesday nationwide had already been canceled by Wednesday morning, according to the tracking service FlightAware. The list for cancellations included both



ELIAS VALVERDE II, THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/AP

Members of the Carnales Off Road Jeep club work to pull a semi-truck up an ice-covered hill on westbound Interstate 20 near Loop 408 in Dallas on Tuesday. About a dozen members from the club helped clear several semi-trucks and passenger vehicles from the roadway.

major airports in Dallas and airports in San Antonio and Austin, Texas, and Nashville, Tenn.

Nearly 260,000 power outages were reported in Texas, including more than 130,000 in the the state capital of Austin, according to the website PowerOutage, which tracks utility reports.

Electric Reliability Council of Texas President and CEO Pablo Vegas has vowed that the state's electrical grid and natural gas supply will be reliable, and there would be no repeat of the February 2021 blackouts when the grid was on the brink of total failure.

As the ice and sleet enveloped

Memphis, Tenn., Memphis-Shelby County Schools announced it would cancel classes Wednesday due to freezing rain and hazardous road conditions. The school system has about 100,000 students. The National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis was also closed due to the weather.

Also in Memphis, the icy weather delayed the funeral service for Tyre Nichols, who died following a brutal beating by police after a traffic stop.

The Dallas Independent School District, with about 145,000 students, also canceled classes Wednesday.

Emergency responders rushed

to hundreds of auto collisions across Texas on Tuesday and Republican Gov. Greg Abbott urged people not to drive. At least six people died on slick Texas roads since Monday, including a triple fatality crash Tuesday near Brownfield, about 40 miles southwest of Lubbock.

Two Texas law officers, including a state trooper who was struck by a vehicle while investigating a crash on Interstate 45 southeast of Dallas, were seriously injured, authorities said.

In Arkansas, Republican Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared a state of emergency Tuesday because of icy conditions.

Job market still hot, to Fed's dismay

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. job openings rose to 11 million in December, delivering a setback to the Federal Reserve's effort to cool a hot job market.

Openings were up from 10.44 million in November and were the highest since July, according to data released Wednesday by the Labor Department. Economists had expected job openings to drop slightly in December.

For 18 straight months, employers have posted at least 10 million openings — a level never reached before 2021 in Labor Department data going back to 2000. The number of openings in December meant that there were about two vacancies for every unemployed American.

Employers hired 6.17 million workers in December, up from 6.03 million in November.

Still, layoffs and discharges blipped up to 1.47 million in December from 1.42 million in November. And the number of Americans quitting their jobs — a sign they have confidence they can find a better opportunity elsewhere — fell slightly in December.

Hotels, restaurants and bars accounted for more than 70% of the December increase in job openings.

Hiring has remained strong even in the face of rising interest rates, which can increase costs for businesses.

NATION

House Republicans set to oust Omar from committee

BY LISA MASCARO
AND KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Newly empowered House Republicans are preparing to oust an African-born Black lawmaker, Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, from the Foreign Affairs Committee over comments she has made critical of Israel — and as payback after Democrats booted far-right Republicans from panels for incendiary, violent remarks.

A procedural vote set for Wednesday would gauge Republican support for the move against the Muslim lawmaker, who has apologized for comments that she has said she came to understand were viewed as antisemitic. A final vote was expected Thursday.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has been eager to flex Republican power to remove the Minnesota Democrat after he blocked Rep. Adam Schiff and Rep. Eric Swalwell, both California Democrats, from rejoining the House Intelligence Committee once the GOP took control of the chamber in January. Unlike most committees, appointments to the Intelligence

Committee are the prerogative of the speaker.

“This is about vengeance. This is about spite. This is about politics,” said Rep. James McGovern, of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the Rules Committee, as Republicans called a hurried meeting late Tuesday to consider the resolution.

McGovern argued that Democrats had removed Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., and Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., for remarks that were far more extreme and violent against fellow lawmakers than those Omar had made and apologized for.

Republicans said they were waiting for Democrats to formally nominate Omar to the committee, which she served on during the last Congress. Once the committee roster is approved by the House, then Republicans would move to strip her of the seat.

Democrats had yet to formally submit their roster for a vote, which was delaying the committee's formation.

The resolution against Omar was proposed by Rep. Max Miller, R-Ohio, a former official in the



JABIN BOTSFORD/The Washington Post

Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., speaks with reporters on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. House Republicans are preparing to oust Omar from the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Trump administration. It says that “Omar’s comments have brought dishonor to the House of Representatives.”

Omar said the issues Republicans have cited in opposing her are a pretext to justify their actions. In reality, “it is about revenge. It’s about appeasing the former president,” Omar said a recent news conference at the Capitol, referring to Donald Trump.

Omar said that she, along with Schiff and Swalwell, who were House managers in Trump’s impeachment trials, “have been a thorn in the back of the previous, disgraced president.”

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., said Omar brings a “powerful perspective” to the committee, and she accused Republicans of engaging in a “disgusting form

of targeting.”

McCarthy, R-Calif., has strained to ensure he has enough support from his Republican ranks to oust Omar. Republicans command a slim majority and several GOP lawmakers have been reluctant to engage in tit-for-tat retribution against colleagues. But GOP leaders are moving ahead after several holdouts signaled their support.

The drive against Omar comes as embattled Republican Rep. George Santos said he would step aside from his own committee assignments as the House Ethics Committee investigates his actions. The New York Republican has acknowledged embellishments and even lies about his education, work experience and other aspects of his personal and professional life.

Haley is closer to a run for presidency

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Nikki Haley is moving closer to making her presidential campaign official.

On Wednesday, supporters of the former South Carolina governor will get an email invitation to a Feb. 15 launch event in Charleston, at which she plans to announce her campaign, according to a person familiar with the plans but not authorized to speak publicly about them.

News of Haley’s plans was first reported by The Post and Courier of Charleston.

Haley, 51, served as South Carolina’s governor for six years before serving as President Donald Trump’s ambassador to the United Nations. When she enters the race, Haley will be the first contender to join the contest against her former boss, who is currently the sole Republican seeking his party’s 2024 nomination.

Trump was in South Carolina on Saturday for the initial campaign swing of his 2024 campaign, standing alongside Gov. Henry McMaster — who served as Haley’s lieutenant governor — and several GOP members of the state’s delegation, part of his leadership team in the early-voting state.



Haley

During the Trump administration, Haley feuded at times with other White House officials while bolstering her own public persona. Her 2018 departure fueled speculation that she would challenge Trump in 2020, or replace Vice President Mike Pence on the ticket, but Haley did neither.

Instead, Haley returned to South Carolina, where she bought a home on Kiawah Island, joined the board of aircraft manufacturer Boeing Co. and launched herself on the speaking circuit. She penned two books, a step commonly taken by many on the road toward the White House.

After the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol siege, Haley initially cast doubts on Trump’s political future but said she wouldn’t challenge him in 2024.

In 2021, Haley said that she “would not run if President Trump ran,” but she has since shifted course, ramping up activity through her Stand for America nonprofit and political action committee, and endorsing dozens of candidates in the 2022 midterm elections.

On Saturday, Trump told WIS-TV that Haley had called him several days earlier to seek his opinion. Trump pointed out her earlier pledge not to run against him but said he made no attempts to stop her.

DeSantis pushes ban on diversity programs in state colleges

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Tuesday announced plans to block state colleges from having programs on diversity, equity and inclusion, and critical race theory.

The Republican governor debuted the proposal as part of a larger, higher education legislative package that is expected to be taken up by the GOP-controlled statehouse when its regular session begins in March.

DeSantis, a potential 2024 Republican presidential candidate, has heavily criticized critical race theory, which examines systemic racism — as well as diversity, equity and inclusion programs, commonly known as DEI.

Critical race theory is a way of thinking about America’s history through the lens of racism. Scholars developed it during the 1970s and 1980s in response to what scholars viewed as a lack of racial progress following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. It centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation’s institutions, which function to maintain the dominance of white people in society.

“I think people want to see true academics and they want to get rid of some of the political window dressing that seems to accompany all this,” DeSantis said at a news conference in Bradenton, adding that DEI and CRT programs would get “No funding, and that will wither on the vine.”

In a statement, the governor’s office said the proposal “raises the standards of learning and civil discourse of public higher education in Florida” by “prohibiting higher education institutions from using any funding, regardless of source, to support DEI, CRT, and other discriminatory initiatives.”

Later in the day, the newly conservative majority on the once progressive New College of Florida board of trustees — most of whom DeSantis recently appointed — voted to oust the current president, Patricia Okker. They also voted to begin debate on whether to abolish the office of diversity, equity and inclu-



DeSantis

sion, and related programs. The final word on DEI programs will come at another meeting.

The idea is to transform the school of less than 1,000 students in Sarasota into what the new trustees call a “classical” liberal arts school.

“I think it’s time for us to set a new standard,” said one of the new trustees, conservative activist Christopher Rufo. “I think new leadership is the expectation.”

The trustees voted to hire Richard Corcoran as the next New College president. The Republican former state House speaker and education commissioner is a close ally of DeSantis.

Before the meeting, dozens of students held a rally outside to oppose major changes to the school and its mission, which is known for its open approach to coursework without specific grades, and being a safe place for LGBTQ students who feel marginalized in other schools.

“That’s what’s at stake today and what we’re here to protect: the freedom to learn, the freedom to think and the freedom to be who we are,” said fourth-year student Madison Markham.

The governor’s overall higher

education proposal was expected after the DeSantis administration requested in late December that state colleges submit spending data and other information on programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion, and critical race theory.

The governor is also pushing for education administrators to “re-align” courses to provide historically accurate information and to not include identity politics. DeSantis’ proposals have not yet been introduced as formal legislation but the GOP-controlled statehouse is often eager to carry out his initiatives.

DeSantis and other conservatives have long argued that critical race theory, and diversity, equity and inclusion programs are racially divisive and discriminatory — and are often cited in criticism of what they often call “woke” ideology in education. Last year the governor signed legislation dubbed the Stop WOKE Act that restricts certain race-based conversations and analysis, in schools and businesses. The law bars instruction that says members of one race are inherently racist or should feel guilt for past actions committed by others of the same race, among other things.

NATION

Monkeys found but mystery deepens in Dallas

By JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

DALLAS — Two monkeys taken from the Dallas Zoo were found Tuesday in an abandoned home after going missing the day before from their enclosure, which had been cut. But no arrests have been made, deepening the mystery at the zoo that has included other cut fences, the escape of a small leopard and the suspicious death of an endangered vulture.

Dallas police said they found the two emperor tamarin monkeys after getting a tip they could be in an abandoned home in Lancaster, located just south of the zoo. The animals were located, safe, in a closet, and then returned to zoo for veterinary evaluation.

Police said earlier Tuesday that they were still working to determine whether or not the incidents over the last few weeks are related.

Meanwhile, in Louisiana, officials were investigating after 12 squirrel monkeys were taken from a zoo there Sunday and considering whether there could be a connection.

Here's what is known so far about the incidents:

■ What has happened at the Dallas zoo?

The zoo closed Jan. 13 after workers arriving that morning found that the clouded leopard, named Nova, was missing. After a search that included police, the leopard weighing 20-25 pounds was found later that day near her habitat.

Police said a cutting tool was intentionally used to make the open-



Emperor tamarin

ing in her enclosure. A similar gash was also found in an enclosure for langur monkeys, though none got out or appeared harmed, police said.

On Jan. 21, an endangered lappet-faced vulture named Pin was found dead by arriving workers. Gregg Hudson, the zoo's president and CEO, called the death "very suspicious" and said the vulture had "a wound," but declined to give further details.

Hudson said in a news conference following Pin's death that the vulture enclosure didn't appear to be tampered with.

On Monday, police said the two emperor tamarin monkeys — which have long whiskers that look like a mustache — were believed to have been taken after someone cut an opening in their enclosure.

The following day, police released a photo and video of a man they said they wanted to talk to about the monkeys. The photo shows a man eating Doritos chips while walking, and in the video clip he is seen walking down a path.

■ What could be the motive in taking the monkeys?

Lynn Cuny, founder and president of Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation in Kendalia, Texas, said she wouldn't be surprised if it turns out the monkeys were taken to be sold. Depending on the buyer, she said, a monkey like those could be sold for



SHAKFAT ANOWAR, THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/AP

A Dallas police are working to determine whether a recent spate of incidents at the Dallas Zoo are related.

"several thousands" of dollars.

"Primates are high-dollar animals in the wildlife pet trade in this country," Cuny said. "Everybody that wants one wants one for all the wrong reasons — there's never any good reason to have any wild animal as a pet."

She said there were a variety of ways the taken monkeys could have been in danger, from an improper diet to exposure to cold. Temperatures in Dallas dipped into the 20s on Tuesday during a winter storm.

■ What is known about the vulture?

Pin's death has been hard on the staff, a zoo official said. The vulture

was "a beloved member of the bird department," according to Harrison Edell, the zoo's executive vice president for animal care and conservation.

Speaking at a news conference, Edell said Pin was at least 35 years old and had been at the zoo for 33 years. "A lot of our teams have worked closely with him for all of that time," Edell said.

Pin, one of four lappet-faced vultures at the zoo, was said to have sired 11 offspring, and his first grandchild hatched in early 2020.

Edell said Pin's death was not only a personal loss but also a loss for the species, which "could potential-

ly go extinct in our lifetime."

■ What is known about security?

Hudson, the zoo's CEO, said in a news conference following Pin's death that normal operating procedures included over 100 cameras to monitor public, staff and exhibit areas, and that number had been increased. Overnight presence of security and staff was also raised.

Where possible, he said, zoo officials limited the ability of animals to go outside overnight.

After Nova went missing, officials said they had reviewed surveillance video but not what it showed.

The zoo was closed Tuesday and Wednesday due to the storm.

Baldwin faces involuntary manslaughter charge in set death

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — Prosecutors linked Alec Baldwin to an expansive list of alleged failures in firearms safety as they filed a felony involuntary manslaughter charge Tuesday against the actor in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer on a New Mexico movie set.

Halyna Hutchins died shortly after being wounded during rehearsals at a ranch on the outskirts



Baldwin

Joel Souza.

Baldwin and film-set weapons supervisor Hannah Gutierrez-Reed face charges of involuntary

manslaughter in the death of Hutchins on the set of the Western movie "Rust."

A manslaughter charge can be brought for a killing that occurs while a defendant is doing something lawful but dangerous and is acting negligently or without caution.

Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed maintain their innocence and have vowed to fight the charges.

In newly filed court documents,

prosecutors say safety failures accompanied the film production from the outset. They cite Baldwin's failure as an actor to appear for mandatory firearms training prior to filming and his decision as a producer to work with Gutierrez-Reed, who was an uncertified and inexperienced armorer.

A probable cause statement from investigators traces safety failures across a 10-day period from misfires on set and a camera

crew walkout to the moments before Hutchins' death as a revolver was loaded with ammunition and Baldwin's finger came to rest on the pistol's trigger.

"Baldwin's deviation from known standards, practices and protocol directly caused the fatal death of Hutchins," Robert Shilling, a special investigator for the Santa Fe district attorney's office, said in the probable cause statement.

'Dances with Wolves' actor arrested in Nevada sex abuse case

Associated Press

NORTH LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas police on Tuesday arrested and raided the home of a former "Dances With Wolves" actor turned alleged cult leader accused of sexually assaulting young Indigenous girls during a period spanning two decades, according to police records obtained by The Associated Press.

Nathan Lee Chasing His Horse, who goes by Nathan Chasing Horse, was taken into custody in the after-

noon near the North Las Vegas home he is said to share with his five wives. SWAT officers were seen outside the two-story home in the evening as detectives searched the property.

Known for his role as the young Sioux tribe member Smiles a Lot in the Oscar-winning Kevin Costner film, Chasing Horse gained a reputation among tribes across the United States and in Canada as a so-called medicine man who per-

formed healing ceremonies and spiritual gatherings and, police allege, used his position to abuse young Native American girls.

His arrest is the culmination of a monthslong investigation that began after police received a tip in October. According to a 50-page search warrant obtained by AP, Chasing Horse is believed to be the leader of a cult known as The Circle.

According to the document, Las Vegas police have identified at least

six alleged victims and uncovered sexual allegations against Chasing Horse dating to the early 2000s in multiple states, including Montana, South Dakota and Nevada, where he has lived for about a decade.

According to the warrant, he was banished in 2015 from the Fort Peck Reservation in Poplar, Mont., amid allegations of human trafficking.

"Nathan Chasing Horse used spiritual traditions and their belief system as a tool to sexually assault

young girls on numerous occasions," it reads, adding that his followers believed he could communicate with higher beings and referred to him as "Medicine Man" or "Holy Person."

Although the warrant includes details of crimes reported elsewhere, the arrest stems from crimes allegedly committed in Nevada's Clark County. They include sex trafficking, sexual assault of a child younger than 16 and child abuse.

NATION

Plan to resurrect dodo draws hope, doubt

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The dodo bird isn't coming back anytime soon. Nor is the woolly mammoth. But a company working on technologies to bring back extinct species has attracted more investors, while other scientists are skeptical such feats are possible or a good idea.

Colossal Biosciences first announced its ambitious plan to revive the woolly mammoth two years ago, and on Tuesday said it wanted to bring back the dodo bird, too.

"The dodo is a symbol of man-made extinction," said Ben Lamm, a serial entrepreneur and co-founder and CEO of Colossal. The company has formed a division to focus on bird-related genetic technologies.

The last dodo, a flightless bird about the size of a turkey, was killed in 1681 on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius.

The Dallas company, which launched in 2021, also announced Tuesday it had raised an additional \$150 million in funding. To date, it has raised \$225 million from wide-ranging investors that include United States Innovative Technology Fund, Breyer Capital and In-Q-Tel, the CIA's venture capital firm which invests in technology.

The prospect of bringing the dodo back isn't expected to directly make money, said Lamm. But the



MATT DUNHAM/AP

A rare fragment of a Dodo femur bone is displayed in 2013 for photographs next to an image of a member of the extinct bird species at Christie's auction house's premises in London.

genetic tools and equipment that the company develops to try to do it may have other uses, including for human health care, he said.

For example, Colossal is now testing tools to tweak several parts of the genome simultaneously. It's also working on technologies for what is sometimes called an "artificial womb," he said.

The dodo's closest living relative is the Nicobar pigeon, said

Beth Shapiro, a molecular biologist on Colossal's scientific advisory board, who has been studying the dodo for two decades. Shapiro is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press' Health and Science Department.

Her team plans to study DNA differences between the Nicobar pigeon and the dodo to understand "what are the genes that really

make a dodo a dodo," she said.

The team may then attempt to edit Nicobar pigeon cells to make them resemble dodo cells. It may be possible to put the tweaked cells into developing eggs of other birds, such as pigeons or chickens, to create offspring that may in turn naturally produce dodo eggs, said Shapiro. The concept is still in an early theoretical stage for dodos.

Because animals are a product of both their genetics and their environment — which has changed dramatically since the 1600s — Shapiro said that "it's not possible to recreate a 100% identical copy of something that's gone."

Other scientists wonder if it's even advisable to try, and question whether "de-extinction" diverts attention and money away from efforts to save species still on Earth.

"There's a real hazard in saying that if we destroy nature, we can just put it back together again — because we can't," said Duke University ecologist Stuart Pimm, who has no connection to Colossal.

"And where on Earth would you put a woolly mammoth, other than in a cage?" asked Pimm, who noted that the ecosystems where mammoths lived disappeared long ago.

On a practical level, conservation biologists familiar with captive breeding programs say that it can be tricky for zoo-bred animals to ever adapt to the wild.

It helps if they can learn from other wild animals of their kind — an advantage that potential dodos and mammoths won't have, said Boris Worm, a biologist at the University of Dalhousie in Halifax, Nova Scotia, who has no connection to Colossal.

"Preventing species from going extinct in the first place should be our priority, and in most cases, it's a lot cheaper," said Worm.

Connecticut may exonerate accused witches centuries later

By **SUSAN HAIGH**
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — Decades before the infamous Salem witch trials in Massachusetts, Else Young was killed at the gallows in Connecticut, becoming the first person on record to be executed in the American colonies for witchcraft.

The Windsor town clerk registered the death on May 26, 1647, in a diary entry that read: "Else Young was hanged." Young was the first of nine women and two men executed by the colony of Connecticut for witchcraft over 15 years, a period during which more than 40 people faced trial for having ties to Satan.

Now, more than 375 years later, amateur historians, researchers and descendants of the accused witches and their accusers hope Connecticut lawmakers will finally offer posthumous exonerations.

While such requests aren't new, they have become louder as many genealogy buffs discover they have distant relatives involved in

the lesser-known Connecticut witch trials.

"They're talking about how this has followed their families from generation to generation and that they would love for someone just to say, 'Hey, this was wrong,'" said Connecticut state Rep. Jane Garibay, who proposed an exoneration resolution after receiving letters from eighth- and ninth-generation relatives of accused witches. "And to me, that's an easy thing to do if it gives people peace."

Other states and countries have attempted to atone for a history of persecuting people as witches. Last year, Scotland's prime minister issued a formal apology to the estimated 4,000 Scots, mostly women, who were accused of witchcraft up until 1736. Of the 4,000, about 2,500 were killed. A Scottish member of parliament last year called for posthumously pardoning them.

In 2022, Massachusetts lawmakers formally exonerated Elizabeth Johnson Jr., who was convicted of witchcraft in 1693 and

sentenced to death at the height of the Salem Witch Trials. Johnson is believed to be the last accused Salem witch to have her conviction set aside by legislators.

In 2006, former Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine gave an informal pardon to Grace Sherwood, a widowed midwife who was blamed by neighbors for ruining crops, killing livestock and creating storms and subsequently accused of being a witch. With her hands bound, Sherwood was thrown into a river to see if she floated, which was purported to indicate guilt. She managed to set herself free and spent seven years in prison.

Connecticut's witch trials were held in the mid-to-late 1600s. In each of the New England colonies, witchcraft was considered a capital offense. According to the earliest laws in the colony of Connecticut, "any man or women (to) be a Witch, that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall bee put to death."

Beth Caruso, an author, co-founded the CT Witch Trial Exon-



JESSICA HILL/AP

Beth Caruso, author and co-founder of the CT Witch Trial Exoneration Project, which was created to clear the names of the accused, stands on the Palisado Green in Windsor, Conn., on Jan. 24, where in 1651, an accident during a local militiamen training exercise led to the accusation of witchcraft and hanging of Lydia Gilbert.

eration Project in 2005 to clear the names of the accused. The group is encouraging people who discovered through genealogy research that they are descendants of victims to contact Connecticut state legislators and urge them to support exoneration legislation.

Connecticut state Sen. Saud Anwar, who also proposed an exoneration bill, said he expects some people might laugh or scoff at the idea of the Legislature taking time

to clear the records of accused witches. But he said the descendants are feeling some "serious stuff," including a constituent who requested the resolution.

"His wish was that if there was a way to give some kind of a closure to the families," Anwar said, "that would be one way for him to be able to say that he has done his share, even though his ancestors may have not done the right thing."

WORLD

Thousands join UK wages strike

Associated Press

LONDON — Thousands of schools in the U.K. closed some or all of their classrooms, train services were paralyzed and delays were expected at airports Wednesday in what's shaping up to be the biggest day of industrial action Britain has seen in more than a decade, as unions step up pressure on the government to demand better pay amid a cost-of-living crisis.

The Trades Union Congress, a federation of unions, estimated that up to half a million workers, including teachers, university staff, civil servants, border officials and train and bus drivers, will walk out of their jobs across the country.

More action, including by nurses and ambulance workers, is planned for the coming days and weeks.

Britons have endured months of disruptions to their daily lives as a bitter dispute over pay and work conditions drags on between unions and the government. But Wednesday's strikes mark an escalation of disruptive action



JACOB KING/AP

Protesters from the National Education Union, Trades Union Congress, Public and Commercial Services, and University and College Union gather Wednesday at the National Strike Action Rally in Birmingham, England.

across multiple key industries.

The last time the country saw mass walkouts on this scale was in 2011, when well over 1 million public sector workers staged a one-day strike in a dispute over pensions. Union bosses say that despite some pay rises — such as a 5% offer the government proposed to teachers — scores of public sector workers have been plunged in-

to financial difficulty because their wages failed to keep pace with soaring inflation, meaning they have effectively been taking a pay cut.

The Trades Union Congress, or TUC, said Wednesday the average public sector worker is \$250 a month worse off compared with 2010, once inflation has been taken into account.

Japanese ex-soldier sues government over sexual abuse

Associated Press

TOKYO — A former Japanese soldier who reported being sexually abused by military colleagues said Monday she has filed a damage suit against five perpetrators and the government because she feels their earlier apologies were empty.

Rina Gonoï went public with her experience last year, demanding the Defense Ministry reinvestigate her case, in which she said she was repeatedly assaulted by several servicemen, causing her to give up her military career. The military had dropped her case when she initially filed a complaint in 2021, saying there was insufficient evidence.

Japan's army in September acknowledged part of the misconduct after an internal probe and apologized. Four of the five perpetrators personally apologized a month later to Gonoï. The ministry in December dismissed the five servicemen and punished four others. Gonoï said she decided to go to court after feeling that the five perpetrators still took their

actions lightly and had stopped responding in their discussions toward a settlement.

She is seeking a total of \$42,270 from her assailants for their misconduct and her mental distress, and \$15,370 from the government over its failure to prevent the assaults, properly investigate and take appropriate steps.

"Honestly, I was very reluctant to fight, and I'd rather not choose this option," Gonoï said. "But the message I got from them was that they still lacked a sense of remorse, and I thought harassment (in the army) can never be eradicated unless I take action."

Gonoï said she still admires the army and the work it does and wants it to become a place "where all servicemembers, men or women, are treated with respect and a sense of justice."

Gonoï was first assigned to a Fukushima unit in April 2020 and said she quickly became a target of sexual misconduct. Her male superiors repeatedly asked her breast size or made unnecessary physical contact, Gonoï said.

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Church says it lost nearly \$800K in email scam

NC ELKIN — Leaders of a northwestern North Carolina church say cybercriminals stole nearly \$800,000 that the congregation spent years raising to build a new sanctuary that's supposed to be completed in a few months.

It happened in November when Elkin Valley Baptist Church received an email that mimicked another message from the sanctuary builder with payment instructions, news outlets reported.

The emails came one after the other on a Friday, according to the church. The following Monday, a church representative responded to what was the cloned email.

"We followed those instructions, not knowing, and paid the bill," Johnny Blevins, the church's senior pastor, told The Elkin Tribune. "It wasn't until several days later that we were contacted by (the builder) about paying the bill and we said, 'we did pay the bill.'"

The Elkin police turned over the case to the FBI.

Sheriff sued for 'Wheel of Fugitive' defamation

FL TITUSVILLE — A man has filed a defamation lawsuit against a Florida sheriff who posts weekly "Wheel of Fugitive" videos on social media, saying that he wasn't a fugitive when his name and image appeared several times in 2021 in the sheriff's posts inspired by the long-running TV game show "Wheel of Fortune."

Because of the sheriff's posts, David Gay lost a job and suffered emotional distress, according to the lawsuit seeking more than \$50,000 in damages. The lawsuit was filed last week in state court in Brevard County.

Gay was sentenced in November 2020 for an undisclosed offense to three years of probation for a withhold of adjudication, a special sentence in which a defendant is not formally convicted of an offense, the lawsuit said.

Gay was taken into custody for violation of probation in January 2021. However, while Gay was in jail for the violation of probation arrest, Ivey said in a "Wheel of Fugitive" video that Gay was a fugitive, when in reality he was already in the Brevard County Jail, according to the lawsuit.

Firefighter injured when swept away in drain

HI WAILUKU — A Hawaii firefighter was critically injured when he was swept into a storm drain and carried the length of eight football fields until being dumped on the shoreline, officials said.

The accident occurred as nearly 13 inches of rain fell on parts of Maui on Friday, and weather officials warned of "unstable weather" ahead, The Maui News reported.



DAVE ZAJAC/AP

Channeling Tigger

Kindergarten teacher Marian Sweeney mimics Tigger while showing students the happiness quadrant of The Mood Meter at Highland Elementary School in Cheshire, Conn., on Jan. 26. Cheshire Public Schools utilize RULER, which stands for recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing and regulating emotions, was developed by the Yale Child Study Center and helps students of all ages recognize their emotions.

ed. A crew responded to a flooded home when the firefighter was caught in a 4-foot-wide storm drain, Maui County spokesperson Mahina Martin said.

Other firefighters and emergency personnel retrieved him from the shoreline, transporting him to a hospital. He was listed late Friday in critical condition, Martin said.

Clothed bathing burglar found in bathroom

WA SEATTLE — A man suspected of breaking into a Seattle home has refused to come clean about his intentions, even though police found him fully clothed in a bathtub filled with water.

A woman returned to her home Friday night to find a window smashed and an unknown man inside the house, according to the Seattle Police Department.

She remained outside the home and called police. Upon their ar-

rival, officers instructed anyone inside to come out. When they got no reply, they went in to search the home — and found a suspect in a bathroom.

The 27-year-old man was arrested for residential burglary and refused to explain his actions, including his choice of a bathing spot, police said.

Police officer accused of shooting another officer

VA WILLIAMSBURG — A local Virginia police officer remains jailed after authorities accused him of shooting another officer while the two were both off duty.

Michael Trenton Rusk, 24, was listed on Saturday as an inmate at Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail in Williamsburg.

Rusk, a James City County police officer, is accused of malicious wounding, the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony and discharging a firearm within

city limits, jail records show.

Authorities have not released the name of the other James City County officer — a 38-year-old man who was shot multiple times early Wednesday in a parking lot next to several Williamsburg businesses.

Driver in cliff crash that injured 4 is charged

CA REDWOOD CITY — The driver of a car that plunged off a treacherous cliff in northern California, seriously injuring himself, his wife and their two young children, was charged Monday with attempted murder.

Dharmesh A. Patel, 41, also faces enhancements for great bodily injury and domestic violence in the Jan. 2 crash, San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said in a statement.

Witness statements from family and motorists, and video footage from the nearby Tom Lantos tunnels provided enough evidence to

charge the father of two, Wagstaffe told the San Francisco Chronicle.

Patel's wife, who remains hospitalized, was "screaming" about her husband's "intentionality" to paramedics after they rappelled down the 250-foot cliff to rescue the family, Wagstaffe said. He declined to share what she said.

"We do believe the evidence establishes the necessary intent to kill," Wagstaffe told the newspaper.

400 Alabama inmates to be released early

AL MONTGOMERY — About 80 Alabama inmates were released with ankle monitors Tuesday as a 2021 law took effect requiring inmates to spend the final few months of their prison sentence on supervised release, the Alabama Department of Corrections said.

The law requires inmates to be released to the supervision of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons somewhere between three and 12 months before their sentences end. The inmates would have been freed from prison anyway in the upcoming months when their sentences end, but would not have had ankle monitors.

Approximately 400 inmates are eligible to be released under the law, Cam Ward, executive director of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles, said Monday. The Alabama Department of Corrections said in a news release that there will be a rolling release of the remaining eligible inmates as required victim notifications are done.

Court upholds 'Clean Car Rule' tied to California

MN ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Court of Appeals on Monday upheld the state's "Clean Car Rule," which ties the state's vehicle emission standards to California regulations, as judges accepted assurances that California's planned phaseout of gasoline-powered cars won't automatically apply in Minnesota.

A three-judge panel rejected the arguments of Minnesota's auto dealers, who argued that state pollution regulators exceeded their authority and unconstitutionally delegated their rulemaking authority to California.

The appeals court concluded that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency acted within its statutory authority and that the state's rule is therefore valid.

The decision was a victory for the administration of Democratic Gov. Tim Walz, which adopted the rule in 2021 amid a fight with Republican lawmakers who were upset that the Legislature was cut out of the decision.

FACES

Nelson, Elliott, Michael among Rock Hall nominees

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Missy Elliott, Willie Nelson, Kate Bush, Iron Maiden, Cyndi Lauper, Soundgarden, Sheryl Crow and the late George Michael are among the nominees for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, reflecting a mix of country, soul, hip-hop, metal, pop, rap-rock and grunge.

The Cleveland-based institution announced Wednesday the 14 artists and groups being considered for 2023 induction, also including Rage Against the Machine, The Spinners, A Tribe Called Quest, The White Stripes, Warren Zevon and Joy Division/New Order.

Artists must have released their first commercial recording at least 25 years before they're eligible for induction.

"This remarkable list of nominees reflects the diverse artists and music that the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame honors and celebrates," said John Sykes, chair of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, in a statement.

"These artists have created their own sounds that have impacted generations and influenced countless others that have followed in their footsteps."

Eight of the 14 nominees are on the ballot for the first time, including Crow, Elliott, Joy Division/New Order, Lauper, Michael, Nelson, The White Stripes and Zevon. This is the first year of eligibility for Elliott and The White Stripes.

A Tribe Called Quest and Bush were nominees last year and didn't make the cut but find themselves back in the running this year.

Bush's latest nod may be due to a new wave in popularity after the show "Stranger Things" featured her song "Running Up That Hill (A Deal with God)."

Inductees will be announced in May. Nominees will be voted on by more than 1,000 artists, historians and music industry professionals. Fans can vote online or in person at the museum, with the top five artists picked by the public making up a "fans' ballot" that will be tallied with the other professional ballots.

Last year, the nomination process was complicated by Dolly Parton, who gave the honor an enthusiastic embrace after temporarily turning it down. She initially said she did not want to take votes away from the remaining nominees and had not "earned that right."



AP
Willie Nelson's nomination for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame follows the nomination and induction of fellow country star Dolly Parton.



VIANNEY LE CAER, INVISION/AP

M. Night Shyamalan's "Knock at the Cabin" is the first feature film in eight years for Rupert Grint, above. Grint, who played Ron Weasley in the "Harry Potter" franchise, is also in the Apple TV+ series "Servant."

Rupert Grint reveals the life of a well-adjusted former child actor

By CHRISTIE D'ZURILLA
Los Angeles Times

Rupert Grint is a former child actor who doesn't behave like a former child actor. That's according to M. Night Shyamalan, director of "Knock at the Cabin," Grint's first feature film project in eight years.

"I've said this to him: He shouldn't exist," Shyamalan told Bustle in an interview published Monday. "A child actor part of an almost religious IP."

The redheaded tween and then teen who played Ron Weasley in the "Harry Potter" franchise has a sense of how rare his story might be.

"I've always felt there was this expectation for us to go off the rails, follow the child star stereotype," Grint said in the interview. "That's always been something to fight against."

According to Shyamalan — also executive producer and director of four episodes of Grint's AppleTV+ series "Servant" — the fight is going well.

"He's kind to everybody," the filmmaker says. "He's always on time. He's super professional. It comes effortlessly to him. He's just an unusual human being in every way. He's truly become a wonderful actor."

So instead of a drug problem, a mental-health crisis and a criminal record, Grint has a wife, a 2-year-old daughter and a slate of crafty hobbies he expects will keep him busy outside of the "one or two" acting projects he told GQ UK he hopes to do each year.

But after the "Harry Potter" actors wrapped work on the final films in the franchise, Grint initially

didn't have a plan for what to do next.

"I couldn't see an obvious next step, so I just did anything in front of me," he told GQ UK in another interview published Monday. "I just wanted to get the passion back."

Former costar Alan Rickman, who died in 2016, encouraged him to try theater, which he did in 2013 on London's West End. That's where he learned the "always on time" thing Shyamalan praised.

After Grint made the entire cast wait for 10 minutes one day because he was late for rehearsal, playwright Jez Butterworth took him aside for a lesson.

"He took me to one side and said, 'You can't be late, OK?' I realized it couldn't be all me, me, me, in the sense that I couldn't just do as I pleased. Just being 10 minutes late had a huge impact on everyone. There was pressure, which I'd rarely felt before."

After a Broadway show and some episodic TV, Grint landed in the world of "Servant," where he says he got his part "on merit" after being made to audition for Shyamalan. The project, now in its fourth season, gave the actor an anchor from which he grabbed the part in "Knock at the Cabin." Both Shyamalan projects are opportunities for him to show the darkness he says lives inside him.

That said, he's not likely to stay dark forever.

"I like the idea of doing something light next — like a Christmas movie," he told Bustle. "I'm happy with where I've ended up."

"Knock at the Cabin," which also stars Dave Bautista, Jonathan Groff, Ben Aldridge and Nikki Amuka-Bird, opens Friday.

After review, Riseborough will keep Oscar nomination

Associated Press

After a review of the awards campaign for the indie drama "To Leslie," the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences said Tuesday that Andrea Riseborough will not be stripped of her Oscar nomination for best actress.

The star-studded grassroots campaign for Riseborough had prompted skepticism from some academy voters and caused a stir in Hollywood. On Friday, the academy announced that it would examine whether any rules were broken. Shortly ahead of nominations, Riseborough was propelled into the race after a host of celebrities hosted screenings of "To Leslie" and numerous A-listers promoted her on social media.

After appeals from "To Leslie" director Michael Morris and his wife, actor Mary McCormack, Kate Winslet, Charlize Theron, Jennifer Aniston, Gwyneth Paltrow, Amy Adams and Courteney Cox all hosted screenings of the film. Riseborough, a well-regarded British actor, was unexpectedly catapulted into the best-actress race despite the very small audience for "To Leslie" (about \$27,000 in box office).

"The Academy has determined the activity in question does not rise to the level that the film's nomination should be rescinded," Bill Kramer, academy chief executive, said in a statement. "However, we did discover social media and outreach campaigning tactics that caused concern. These tactics are being addressed with the responsible parties directly."

The academy has rescinded nominations for campaigning that broke regulations before. Celebrity-hosted screenings are a regular feature of Oscar season, but how voters are contacted during the voting period is regulated. The academy said Riseborough's unorthodox campaign could necessitate tweaks to the bylaws.

Along with Riseborough, the



JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

Andrea Riseborough received a best actress nomination for "To Leslie" after a star-studded campaign that raised concerns about possible violations of film academy rules.

nominees are: Cate Blanchett ("Tár"), Michelle Williams ("The Fabelmans"), Ana de Armas ("Blonde") and Michelle Yeoh ("Everything Everywhere All at Once").

Other news

■ "Dr. Phil" McGraw says he'll stop making new episodes of his daytime TV show after 21 years this spring. The Texas psychologist emerged from Oprah Winfrey's TV tree, spinning off his frequent appearances there to start his own show in 2002.

■ Michelle Obama's recent celebrity-filled book tour is becoming a podcast. Audible announced Wednesday that the former first lady will launch "Michelle Obama: The Light Podcast" on March 7.

■ Beyoncé has announced that she will embark on a "Renaissance" world tour starting in May in Sweden with stops in London, Paris, Barcelona, Toronto and the United States.

■ Rock legend Ozzy Osbourne has announced the cancellation of his 2023 tour dates in the U.K. and continental Europe. Osbourne issued a statement early Wednesday saying damage to his spine suffered in an accident four years ago will prevent him from touring.

STARS AND STRIPES

OPINION

Biden's escalation in Ukraine is about diplomacy

BY HAL BRANDS
Bloomberg Opinion

The war in Ukraine is reaching a new phase, and U.S. strategy is undergoing an important shift. Fears of Russian nuclear escalation are receding as fears of a long war featuring unrelenting attrition are increasing. So President Joe Biden's administration is ramping up support for Ukraine now in hopes of producing an eventual diplomatic resolution—an "escalate to de-escalate" strategy that may prove very difficult to execute.

Nearly a year into the war, uncertainty about its course is greater than ever. For the first six months, Russia had the initiative: The major questions were when, where and with what success it would attack. Over the following five months, Ukraine had the initiative, and analysts tried to divine the location and prospects of its counteroffensives.

Now, it's harder to tell what comes next and who has the edge. Both sides may be preparing new offensives. And both sides are dealing with a mix of battlefield losses and new capabilities that make it more difficult to discern their relative strengths.

Russian President Vladimir Putin probably believes that his best ally is time. If he can keep hammering Ukraine's infrastructure, while at least holding what he has on the battlefield, perhaps he can create a protracted slugfest in which Russia's superior manpower will prove decisive.

Ukraine sees time as its enemy. It must exploit Russia's weakened, poorly equipped forces now, before additional newly mobilized Russian troops arrive on the battlefield, before Russian defense production hits high gear, and before support from Kyiv's Western backers dissipates.

The Biden administration is only guardedly optimistic about Ukraine's prospects. The easiest gains at the expense of an overstretched Russian army may already have been had. Putin is defending a shorter front

with a larger number of troops. That makes routing Russia from every inch of Ukrainian territory difficult, even if Kyiv's committed, creative military can go further than it has to date.

So the U.S. administration is updating its strategy in three ways.

First, it is better defining American war aims. In December, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the U.S. is committed to helping Ukraine liberate lands lost since February 2022, but not necessarily every inch of territory Putin has stolen since 2014. Washington's goal is a Ukraine that is militarily defensible, politically independent and economically viable; this doesn't necessarily include retaking difficult areas such as the eastern Donbas or Crimea.

Second, the U.S. and its allies are sending Ukraine more sophisticated weapons: armored personnel carriers, Patriot missiles, and tanks that can bust through layered Russian defenses. Washington is also moving toward providing longer-range munitions that can pulverize Russian rear areas: The ground-launched small diameter bomb, likely to be part of an upcoming assistance package, has nearly twice the range of the HIMARS rounds Ukrainian forces have used to devastating effect. The next debate may involve sophisticated aircraft: Biden recently said the U.S. won't provide F-16 fighters to Ukraine, but that's also what he said about providing American tanks up until the moment he changed his mind.

Third, Biden may not envision Ukraine liberating Crimea by force, but he has reportedly become more supportive of strikes against Russian targets there. Could hitting Crimea, which is central to Putin's narrative of Russian resurrection under his rule, trigger escalation?

Perhaps. But Putin has bluffed about escalation so many times that his threats are losing credibility. And precisely because Crimea is so important to Putin, threatening him with its

loss may be the best way to force him to negotiate seriously.

Although these various policy shifts seem to cut in opposite directions, there is a unifying logic. The U.S. doesn't want the war to drag on forever, because it is turning much of Ukraine into a wasteland while taking a toll on Western treasuries, arsenals and attention.

So Biden aims to help Ukraine dial up the pressure on Russian forces, and perhaps shift the lines further in its favor, as a pathway to negotiations after the next phase of the fighting has ended.

There's nothing simple about this strategy, as shown by the recent trans-Atlantic fracas over who would give Ukraine what sort of tanks. The U.S. managed that issue adeptly in the end, pledging to send 31 advanced Abrams tanks months from now as a way of freeing up the delivery of perhaps hundreds of European tanks in the coming weeks. But that isn't the only challenge.

Biden is betting that there is a sweet spot at which the Russians will be reeling badly enough to negotiate but not to escalate, and at which the Ukrainians — having won a stronger position — will agree to stop short of what they desire and deserve.

That's possible, although far from certain: It would require both sides to conclude that continuing the war will mostly hurt them, and to identify some nifty diplomatic formula to bridge, or simply obfuscate, the gap between their respective positions on issues like Crimea.

Biden's updated strategy is an intelligent effort to grapple with a shifting battlefield and to figure out how military progress can facilitate a settlement that sticks. That doesn't necessarily mean it will work.

Hal Brands is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. The Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, he is co-author of "Danger Zone: The Coming Conflict with China" and a member of the State Department's Foreign Affairs Policy Board. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

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Ernie Gates

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Biden is right to end national emergency for COVID

BY LEANA S. WEN

Special to The Washington Post

More than three years after the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in the United States, President Joe Biden announced on Monday that the national emergency to combat the coronavirus will end on May 11.

This is the right decision and should hardly come as a surprise. It has been four months since Biden himself said the pandemic was "over." COVID has become endemic, and the focus going forward must shift from treating it as the dire emergency it once was to managing its effects—in particular, protecting those still vulnerable to severe outcomes from the virus.

Few would dispute that COVID today is a very different disease than it was in early 2020. At that time, the virus had a much higher fatality rate, and young, previously healthy people were succumbing to a deadly pneumonia. There were no vaccines and very limited treatments.

Declaring a state of emergency then was necessary for three reasons: First, it highlighted the critical urgency of the situation and helped Americans understand the substantial threat that COVID posed. Second, it mobilized resources to develop and then deploy vaccines and therapeutics that have dramatically re-

duced the severity of the coronavirus. Third, it gave flexibility to health departments, hospitals and other entities to overcome bureaucratic hurdles and provide necessary care.

These reasons either no longer apply or have changed so substantially that they no longer justify a state of emergency. Americans have largely moved on from thinking about the coronavirus as a daily threat — and rightfully so, given that the vast majority have some immunity because of vaccination, prior infection or both. Continuing to call COVID a national emergency is out of step with public opinion, which has a major cost: When there is a true public health emergency in the future, many people might not believe health officials and could defy their guidance.

The emergency declaration succeeded in expediting vaccine development. The Trump administration deserves credit for this, as the Biden administration does for then implementing an extraordinary mass vaccination campaign. More resources would still help, which is why I joined other public health experts in repeatedly calling on Congress to heed the White House's request for additional COVID funding. This hasn't happened for nearly a year, though, and prolonging the declaration isn't likely to change things.

In fact, it could make matters worse. Last month, House Republicans introduced legis-

lation to force Biden to immediately end the public health emergency. Such a move would cause widespread chaos. Hospitals and insurers need time to adjust to pre-COVID regulations while keeping in place positive improvements such as telemedicine access. Plus, as many as 15 million low-income Americans could lose health insurance because the flexibilities around Medicaid coverage will cease when the declaration ends.

If the president didn't set a date himself, Congress might have forced his hand. It's far better for the White House to give advance notice than for there be an abrupt end to the declaration. The administration's focus until May 11 should be to minimize disruptions to the health care system. In the meantime, Biden should continue to be clear that COVID remains a crucial concern. The end of the emergency doesn't mean that COVID is over, but rather that it is joining the list of many other serious illnesses that require constant vigilance.

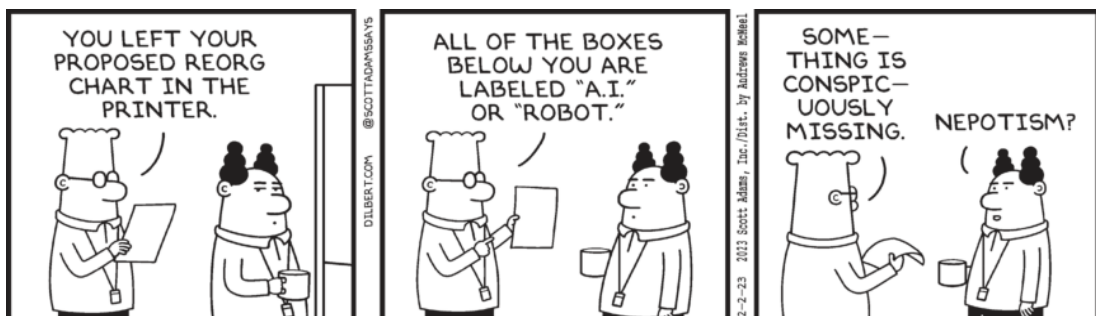
The blanket emergency declaration has to come to an end. The United States can then shift its focus to the many other pressing health concerns in need of attention — including preparing for the next pandemic.

Leana S. Wen, a Washington Post contributing columnist, is a professor at George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health and author of the book "Lifelines: A Doctor's Journey in the Fight for Public Health."

Frazz



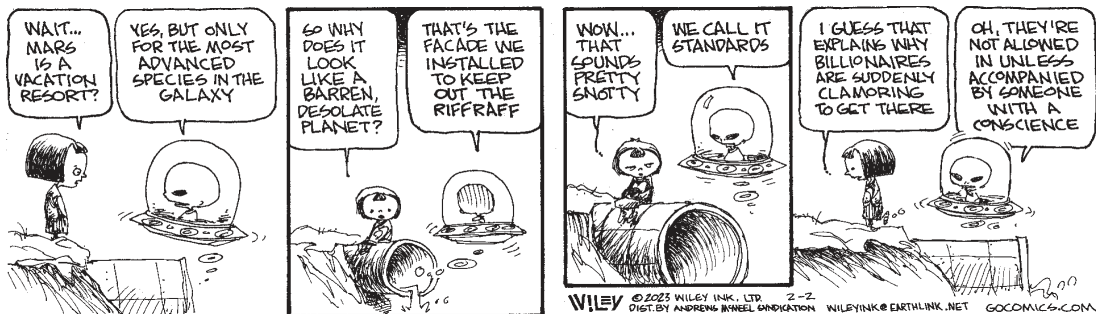
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



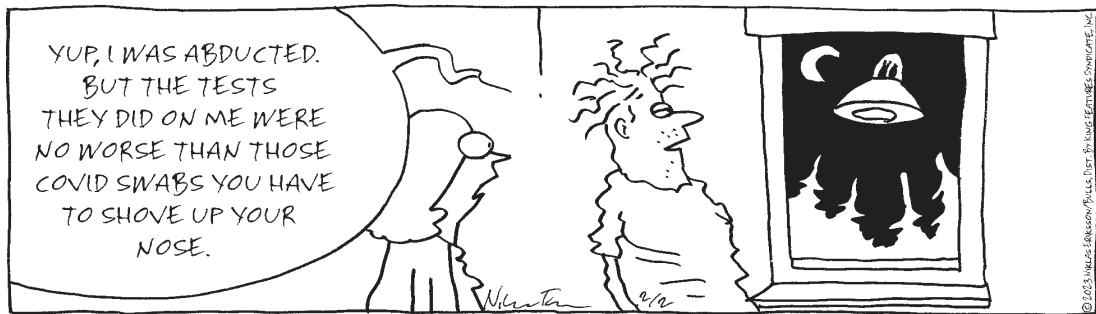
Non Sequitur



Candorville



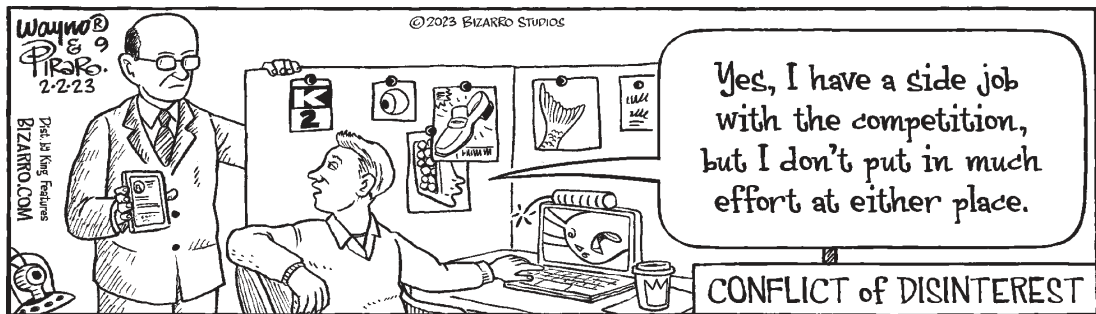
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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

ACROSS

- 1 Nightwear, for short
- 4 Test version
- 8 Galley supply
- 12 Chic no more
- 13 Air freshener target
- 14 Landed
- 15 Hoagy Carmichael song
- 17 Country singer Keith
- 18 King, in Cannes
- 19 Cat variety
- 21 Young feline
- 24 Before
- 25 Poetic tribute
- 26 Melancholy
- 28 "The Trial" author Franz
- 32 School session
- 34 Huge
- 36 Stead
- 37 Pesto herb
- 39 Part of MPH
- 41 Dog doc
- 42 Blue
- 44 Oscar winner Rita
- 46 Shoal
- 50 Reply (Abbr.)
- 51 Jet type
- 52 Hollywood notable
- 56 "Alfred" composer
- 57 Duel tool
- 58 Notre Dame coach

- 59 Disposition
- 60 Chiefs coach Andy
- 61 Fix illegally

DOWN

- 1 Not neg.
- 2 Protrude
- 3 Appetizers
- 4 Physiques
- 5 Sch. URL ender
- 6 Pitch
- 7 "Glee" guitarist
- 8 Breakfast bowlful
- 9 Lip balm ingredient
- 10 Barbecue order
- 11 Eyelid woe
- 16 Decay
- 20 Noah's boat
- 21 "Today" anchor Hoda
- 22 Concept
- 23 Collar
- 27 Quick swim
- 29 Top-quality
- 30 Acute
- 31 Car
- 33 "— Pierce" (HBO miniseries)
- 35 Tiara jewel
- 38 High tennis shot
- 40 Wandered
- 43 Thin cookie
- 45 Hosp. workers
- 46 Bridge coup
- 47 Sleek, in car lingo
- 48 iPod type
- 49 Mature
- 53 Muumuu accessory
- 54 Shapiro of NPR
- 55 Tatter

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	O	M		M	A	S	T		S	A	A	B	
A	K	A		O	R	C	A		O	L	G	A	
M	R	I		S	K	I	N		C	R	E	A	M
S	A	M	O	A		G	A	B					
				D	I	R	T		P	E	R	E	Z
S	U	R	E	C	U	R	E		T	E	R	I	
P	R	E		S	E	E	M	S		D	I	N	
A	G	E	D		S	A	M	C	O	O	K	E	
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S	U	E	Z	C	A	N	A	L			R	O	D
U	R	A	L		Z	A	N	E			O	R	E
B	I	T	E		A	B	C	D			P	E	N

2-2

CRYPTOQUIP

WRTG OPGGU MPRM'O JGKZ
 DBBE RM EGTQJGKQAD KRUQE
 ORTGO OUQGTO OWBBMPTZ: R
 URMMGKQAD KRW.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I FIRMLY BELIEVE KNIGHTS SHOULD NOT KILL EVERY DRAGON. SOME THINGS ARE BETTER LEFT UNSLAYERED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals G

SCOREBOARD/NFL

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Tuesday's men's scores

EAST

Akron 81, Buffalo 64
Boston College 62, Clemson 54
Fordham 75, Saint Louis 65
Maryland 66, Indiana 55
Quinnipiac 72, Marist 66

SOUTH

Alabama 101, Vanderbilt 44
Duke 75, Wake Forest 73
Kentucky 75, Mississippi 66
Miami 92, Virginia Tech 83
Mississippi St. 66, South Carolina 51
VCU 61, Davidson 59

MIDWEST

Ball St. 69, Bowling Green 60
Dayton 85, Loyola Chicago 81, OT
E. Michigan 90, Ohio 79
Illinois 72, Nebraska 56
Iowa 86, Northwestern 70
Kansas 90, Kansas St. 78
Kent St. 81, Cent. Michigan 69
N. Illinois 73, W. Michigan 59
Toledo 81, Miami (Ohio) 78
UConn 90, DePaul 76

SOUTHWEST

Arkansas 81, Texas A&M 70
TCU 76, West Virginia 72

FAR WEST

Boise St. 59, Air Force 52
Nevada 75, San Diego St. 66
UNLV 83, Colorado St. 71
Wyoming 85, Fresno St. 62

Men's AP Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games

No. 1 Purdue vs. Penn St.
No. 2 Tennessee at Florida
No. 14 Marquette vs. Villanova
No. 16 Xavier vs. No. 17 Providence
No. 25 Auburn vs. Georgia

Tuesday's women's scores

EAST

Seton Hall 68, St. John's 58

SOUTH

South Florida 72, East Carolina 48

MIDWEST

Georgetown 44, Xavier 41

SOUTHWEST

Oklahoma 101, TCU 78

TENNIS

Lyon Open

Tuesday

At Palais des Sports Gerland

Lyon, France

Purse: Euro 225,480

Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Women's Singles

Round of 32

Anna Bondar, Hungary, def. Nuria Parri-
zas Diaz, Spain, 6-4, 6-4.
Erika Andreeva, Russia, def. Anna Blin-
kova (8), Russia, 6-7 (3), 6-4, 4-0, ret.
Danka Kovinic (7), Montenegro, def. Vik-
torija Golubic, Switzerland, 6-1, 6-4.
Alycia Parks, United States, def. Julia
Grabher, Austria, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4.
Zhang Shuai (2), China, def. Madison
Breglie, United States, 6-3, 6-2.
Caroline Garcia (1), France, def. Tereza
Martincova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 7-6 (4).
Clara Burel, France, def. Ana Bogdan, Ro-
mania, 7-5, 6-4.

Women's Doubles

Round of 16

Bibiane Schoofs, Netherlands, and Cris-
tina Bucsa, Spain, def. Angela Kulikow,
United States, and Ingrid Martins, Brazil,
5-7, 6-4, 10-6.
Alexandra Panova, Russia, and Olga Da-
nilovic, Serbia, def. Lidziya Marozava, Be-
larus, and Vivian Heisen, Germany, 2-6,
6-2, 10-5.
Nadiia Kichenok, Ukraine, and Makoto
Ninomiya (2), Japan, def. Alena Fomina-
Klotz, Russia, and Elsa Jacquemot, France,
6-4, 3-6, 10-4.

Copa Oster

Tuesday

At Club Campestre

Cali, Colombia

Purse: \$115,000

Surface: Red clay

Women's Singles

Round of 32

Carole Monnet, France, def. Jamie Loeb,
United States, 6-3, 6-4.

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball
American League

BOSTON RED SOX — Agreed to terms
with LHP Matt Dermody on a minor league
contract.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Named Justin
Jirschele manager for Charlotte (IL), Lo-
renzo Bundy manager for Birmingham
(AL), Guillermo Quiroz manager for Win-
ston-Salem (SAL), Patrick Leyland man-
ager for Kannapolis (CRL) and Danny Gonza-
lez manager for the Arizona Complex
League. Named Nicky Delmonico hitting
coach, Danny Farquhar pitching coach
and Donnie Veal assistant pitching coor-
dinator for Birmingham. Named Blake
Hickman pitching coach for Kannapolis.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Claimed LHP
Taylor Saucedo off waivers from the New
York Mets. Designated RHP J.B. Bukauskas
for assignment.

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Agreed to terms
with INF Yandy Diaz on a three-year con-
tract.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Named Jeff Ware
assistant pitching coach/bullpen and Da-
vid Howell assistant pitching coach/strat-
egy.

National League

NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with
INF/OF Jeff McNeil on a four-year contract.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Named An-
thony Contreras manager, Cesar Ramos
pitching coach, Ryan Buchter assistant
pitching coach, Joe Thurston hitting coach
and Pat Listach bench coach for Lehigh
Valley (IL). Named Al Pedrique manager,
Brad Bergesen pitching coach, Tyler Hen-
son hitting coach for Reading (EL). Named
Greg Brodzinski manager, Phil Cundari
pitching coach, Brady Lail pitching devel-
opment coach, Brock Stassi hitting coach
and Chris Adamson bench coach for Jer-
sey Shore (SAL). Named Marty Malloy
manager, Matt Hockenberry pitching
coach and Chris Heintz hitting coach for
Clearwater (FSL).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Agreed to
terms with RHP Willy Peralta on a minor
league contract.

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

DALLAS MAVERICKS — Signed F Chris
Silva to a 10-day contract.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Signed TEs Nick
Bowers and Tanner Hudson, QB Jake
Browning, DEs Owen Carney and Ray-
mond Johnson III, OT Devin Cochran, S Yu-
suf Coker, DT Dominique Davis, G Nate
Gilliam, LB Keandre Jones, WR Kwamie
Lassiter II and CB Marvell Tell III to re-
serve/futures contracts.

NEW YORK JETS — Signed WR Dontae
Spencer to a reserve/futures contract.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed DL Alex
Barrett, OLS Alfredo Gutierrez, Keith Is-
mael, Leroy Watson and Jason Poe, S Tay-
ler Hawkins, DB Qwanterez Knight, WRs
Tay Martin and Dazz Newsome and LB
Curtis Robinson to reserve/futures con-
tracts.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

BOSTON BRUINS — Recalled LW Jakob
Lauko and C Vinni Lettieri from Providence
(AHL).

BUFFALO SABRES — Reassigned C Matej
Pekar from Rochester (AHL) to Cincinnati
(ECHL).

DETROIT RED WINGS — Placed G Jussi Ol-
kinuora on waivers.

ST. LOUIS BLUES — Returned C Nikita
Alexandrov and LW Jake Neighbours to
Springfield (AHL).

SAN JOSE SHARKS — Reassigned G Za-
chary Emond from Wichita (ECHL) to San
Jose (AHL).

VANCOUVER CANUCKS — Loaned C Autu
Raty to Abbotsford (AHL).

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

INTER MIAMI CF — Signed D Sergii Kryv-
stov to a one-year contract.

ORLANDO CITY SC — Signed M Dagur
Dan Thorhallsson to a two-year contract,
pending receipt of his international trans-
fer certificate (ITC) and P-1 visa.

SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES — Signed M
Carlos Gruezo to a designated player con-
tract, pending receipt of his international
transfer certificate (ITC) and P-1 visa.

VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC — An-
nounced the retirement of F Tosaint Rick-
etts and named him liaison of club and
player engagement.



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick, left, talks with quarterback Tom Brady during a game against the Philadelphia Eagles on Aug. 17, 2002, in Foxboro, Mass. Belichick and Brady teamed up to win six Super Bowls in New England. Brady won a seventh after signing a free-agent deal with Tampa Bay.

Again: Buccaneers made playoffs all three seasons with Brady at QB

FROM PAGE 24

The Buccaneers — with whom he won a Super Bowl two seasons ago — made the playoffs again this season, losing in their playoff opener. And at the time, it begged the question about whether Brady would play again.

Only a couple of weeks later, he has given the answer.

“I know the process was a pretty big deal last time, so when I woke up this morning, I figured I’d just press record and let you guys know first,” Brady says in the video. “I won’t be long-winded. You only get one super emotional retirement essay and I used mine up last year.

“I really thank you guys so much, to every single one of you for supporting me. My family, my friends, teammates, my competitors. I could go on forever. There’s too many. Thank you guys for allowing me to live my absolute dream. I wouldn’t change a thing. Love you all.”

Brady is the NFL’s career leader in yards passing (89,214) and touchdowns (649). He is the only player to win more than five Super Bowls and has been MVP of the game five times. He also holds marks for regular-season wins (251), Super Bowl appearances (10), playoff games and wins (48, 35), as well as playoff yards (13,400) and TDs (88).

“Tom’s legacy is unmatched in the history of this game. All the Super Bowl titles and statistical records speak for themselves, but the impact he had on so many people through the years is what I appre-



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Brady holds up the Vince Lombardi Trophy after leading Tampa Bay to a 31-9 victory over Kansas City in Super Bowl 55.

ciate the most,” Buccaneers general manager Jason Licht said.

“His imprint on this organization helped take us to the mountaintop. We will certainly miss him as our quarterback, but I will also miss him as a leader and friend,” Licht added. “Our entire organization is indebted to him for what he provided us over the past three years. We won’t ever forget the wins or the accolades, and his influence will be felt for years to come.”

Famously underrated coming into the NFL — he was picked 199th in the 2000 draft by the Pa-

triotics, behind six other quarterbacks, three kickers and a punter — Brady certainly wasn’t expected to become synonymous with greatness. He played in one game as a rookie, completing one of three passes for 6 yards.

The next year, it all changed.

Brady took over as the Patriots’ starter, the team beat the St. Louis Rams in the Super Bowl that capped the 2001 season and he and New England coach Bill Belichick were well on their way to becoming the most successful coach-QB duo in football history.

More Super Bowl wins came after the 2003 and 2004 seasons. The Patriots returned to football’s mountaintop for a fourth time in Brady’s era a decade later to cap the 2014 season, the start of three more titles in a span of five years.

He signed with Tampa Bay in free agency in 2020 and added a seventh Super Bowl ring to his collection in his first season with his new team. The Bucs won 37 games (including postseason) with Brady at quarterback — third most in the league over the past three seasons behind Kansas City (46) and Buffalo (41).

“I think I’ve been on the record dozens of times saying there’s no quarterback I’d rather have than Tom Brady, and I still feel that way,” Belichick said in 2021 — shortly before Tampa Bay, with Brady, came to New England and beat the Patriots in a game dubbed “The Return.” “I was very lucky to have Tom as the quarterback, to coach him, and he was as good as any coach could ever ask for.”

NFL

Source: Broncos make deal to land Payton

By ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The Denver Broncos have agreed to a deal with the New Orleans Saints that will make Sean Payton their head coach, a person with knowledge of the accord said Tuesday.

The person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the teams hadn't announced the agreement, said the Broncos would send their first-round pick, No. 29 overall, in this year's draft to the Saints along with a future second-rounder. Denver will also receive a third-round pick in the trade.

Payton remained under contract with New Orleans after stepping down from the Saints last year and working in broadcasting this season.

Payton, 59, went 152-89 in 15 seasons with the Saints and 9-8 in the playoffs. He led New Orleans to a 31-17 win over the Indianapolis Colts in the Super Bowl following the 2009 season. He stepped away last year when quarterback Drew Brees retired.

The Broncos, who went 5-12 in 2022 and extended their playoff drought to seven years, fired rookie coach Nathaniel Hackett on Dec. 26 after he went 4-11. Interim coach Jerry Rosburg went 1-1.

Payton's top task will be to get quarterback Russell Wilson back to his winning ways after the 11-year pro had his worst statistical season following his blockbuster trade



GARY McCULLOUGH/AP

Then-New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton watches a play during a football game against the Tennessee Titans in Nashville, Tenn., on Nov. 14, 2021. Payton retired after the 2021 season.

from Seattle for four premium draft picks and three players.

The Seahawks reached the playoffs under QB Geno Smith in their first year without Wilson, and now they own the Broncos' No. 5 overall selection in the draft in April.

The Broncos got back into the first round by trading pass rusher Bradley Chubb at midseason to the Miami Dolphins, who sent the Broncos a first-rounder originally

owned by the San Francisco 49ers. That selection, the 29th overall pick, now belongs to the Saints.

Payton was the headliner during this year's cycle of head coach openings. Just five teams were searching for coaches: the Broncos, Texans, Panthers, Colts and Cardinals.

The Broncos conducted an extensive search, beginning with a virtual visit with Jim Harbaugh, who decided to stay at the Universi-

ty of Michigan. Also considered were Dan Quinn, DeMeco Ryans, Raheem Morris, Ejiro Evero, Jim Caldwell and David Shaw. The Texans hired Ryans on Tuesday.

NFL rules didn't allow the Broncos to speak with Payton until Jan. 17, more than three weeks after they'd fired Hackett.

Team owner and CEO Greg Penner led the search along with assistance from limited partner Condoleezza Rice and general manager

George Paton.

Paton led last year's search and landed on Hackett, one of several decisions that backfired on him in 2022 as Hackett became just the fifth head coach in NFL history not to survive his first season.

Others were the \$70 million contract he gave to free agent Randy Gregory, who played in six games and recorded a pair of sacks, and the \$245 million contract extension he gave to Wilson before the opener.

Wilson threw a career-low 16 touchdown passes and was sacked a league-leading and career-high 55 times in 15 games for Denver. He has vowed to do everything he can to bounce back in 2023.

Wilson played well for two weeks under Rosburg, giving the team hope that his poor performances last season were an aberration and that maybe his skill set was just a bad fit in Hackett's offense.

Penner, his wife, Carrie Walton-Penner, and her father, Rob Walton, purchased the Broncos last summer for \$4.65 billion, a global record for a professional sports franchise. But the team turned out to be more of a fixer-upper than they expected.

"When we purchased this great franchise in August, this is not the season we were expecting," Penner said after firing Hackett. "I want to personally apologize to our fans and all of Broncos country. We know that we need to be better and we will."

Texans hire 49ers defensive coordinator Ryans as coach

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

HOUSTON — DeMeco Ryans has been hired as coach of the Houston Texans, giving him his first head coaching job and bringing him back to the place where he started his playing career.

Ryans joins the Texans from the San Francisco 49ers, where he spent the past two seasons as their defensive coordinator.

He replaces Lovie Smith, who was fired after just one season where the team went 3-13-1.

Ryans issued a statement thanking the 49ers, coach Kyle Shanahan and general manager John Lynch for his time in San Francisco before looking ahead to his future with the Texans.

"Being the head coach of the Houston Texans is my dream job and my family is thrilled to be back in H-Town," Ryans said. "I have been around the game of football my entire life and I've always had a natural ability to lead others. I know what it takes to win and be successful in this league as both a player and coach."

"We're going to build a program filled with players who have a special work ethic and relentless



JEFF CHIU/AP

San Francisco 49ers defensive coordinator DeMeco Ryans speaks at a news conference before practice in Santa Clara, Calif., on Jan. 26.

mindset," he continued. "I understand the responsibility I have to this organization and to the fans of Houston to build a winner, and I can't wait to get to work."

A fan favorite during his playing days in Houston, Ryans could help the team win back some fans that have become disenchanted with the direction of the Texans as they have muddled through three straight dreadful seasons after

winning the AFC South in 2018 and 2019.

Houston's most famous former player, J.J. Watt, appeared to support the move, with the recently retired defensive end tweeting a picture this week of himself with Ryans when the two played for the Texans.

Team owner Cal McNair vowed to be more involved in this hiring after the Texans fired their past

two coaches after just one season. David Culley was fired after coaching the team in the 2021 season before Smith was hired.

"For so many reasons, DeMeco is everything we are looking for in a leader and coach for our organization," McNair said. "He has a proven track record for developing high-quality players and constantly innovated his defensive scheme over the last six seasons in San Francisco."

Ryans is the third consecutive Black head coach the team has hired in as many years. The Texans faced criticism for firing two Black coaches after just one season with rosters devoid of any stars and lacking much talent.

Ryans led a 49ers defense that led the NFL this season by allowing just 300.6 yards a game.

San Francisco was particularly good against the run, ranking second in the league by holding teams to 77.7 yards. That's a stark contrast to Houston's run defense, which ranked last in the NFL by allowing 170.2 yards this season.

Ryans helped the 49ers to a 13-4 regular-season record and the NFC West title this season. San Francisco reached the NFC cham-

pionship game before falling to Philadelphia on Sunday.

The Texans decided on Ryans after interviewing Denver defensive coordinator Ejiro Evero, Giants offensive coordinator Mike Kafka, Rams assistant head coach Thomas Brown, former Saints coach Sean Payton, Philadelphia defensive coordinator Jonathan Gannon, Philadelphia offensive coordinator Shane Steichen and Detroit offensive coordinator Ben Johnson.

The 38-year-old Ryans was a linebacker who was a second-round pick of the Texans in 2006. He led the NFL with 126 solo tackles that season to win AP Defensive Rookie of the Year honors.

He spent his first six NFL seasons with the Texans, where he was selected to the Pro Bowl in 2007 and 2009. Ryans started all 16 games in five of his six seasons in Houston and piled up 636 tackles, including 43 for losses and 8½ sacks.

Ryans has spent his entire coaching career with the 49ers. He was San Francisco's inside linebackers coach from 2018-20 after spending the 2017 season as the defensive quality control coach.

NFL/NBA/COLLEGE FOOTBALL



JACOB KUPFERMAN/AP

Former Panthers head coach Matt Rhule filed an arbitration suit against Carolina seeking about \$5 million in offset severance.

Rhule seeking \$5M in suit vs. Panthers

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Nebraska football coach Matt Rhule has filed an arbitration suit with the NFL against the Carolina Panthers seeking about \$5 million in offset severance compensation, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Rhule was fired as Panthers head coach on Oct. 10. He has since hired high-profile New York City litigator John Singer of Singer-Deutsch LLP to handle the lawsuit, according to the person who spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the arbitration suit has not been made public.

A Panthers spokesman would not confirm the suit and declined to comment to the AP. Rhule, reached by text, also declined to comment.

CBS Sports was first to report the arbitration suit.

Rhule was fired after Week 5 of the NFL season, less than three

years into a seven-year, \$62 million contract. He was 11-27 as head coach with the Panthers. He was owed approximately \$34 million at the time he was fired by billionaire David Tepper, the NFL's second-wealthiest owner.

Rhule returned to college coaching in November when he was hired by Nebraska, receiving a reported eight-year, \$72 million contract that seemingly offset what the Panthers owed him. But the arbitration suit alleges the Panthers still owe him about \$5 million because of how the contract with Carolina was structured.

The Panthers introduced Frank Reich as their new head coach at a news conference on Tuesday.

Tepper said he made a "mistake" hiring Rhule, whom he described as a "CEO-type head coach." Tepper added that it is "preferable to have a coach that is really extraordinary on one side of the ball or the other side of the ball."

After NIL flap, QB Rashada commits to Arizona State

Associated Press

Blue-chip quarterback Jaden Rashada, who signed with Florida in December and then asked to be released from the commitment when a name, image and likeness deal fell through, says he is going to Arizona State.

Rashada announced on Twitter on Wednesday, the first day of the traditional signing period for high school football players, that he would be attending his "childhood dream school" and father's alma mater.

"Glad to truly be home!" Rashada posted.

Rashada, a four-star recruit from California, was the focal point of a recruiting fight between Miami and

Florida that led to a bidding war between booster-run collectives that try to secure sponsorship deals for athletes from those schools.

He had originally given a verbal commitment to Miami but flipped to Florida after being offered an NIL deal that could have been worth \$13 million dollars.

When it became clear that Gator Collective did not have the money to fund the deal, Rashada asked to be released from the national letter of intent he signed in December.

Rashada becomes the highest-profile high school recruit in new Arizona State coach Kenny Dillingham's first signing class. The 32-year-old Arizona native was hired in December.

AROUND THE NBA

Voting for All-Star reserves sure to lead to some snubs

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Brace yourself. There's going to be some angry people in the NBA on Thursday night.

With good reason.

The votes from the coaches are now in, and on Thursday, the NBA will reveal the 14 players — seven from the Eastern Conference, seven more from the Western Conference — who got picked to be reserves for the All-Star Game.

They'll join the pool of 10 starters: the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James, Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, Dallas' Luka Doncic, Boston's Jayson Tatum, Brooklyn teammates Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, Golden State's Stephen Curry, Cleveland's Donovan Mitchell, Denver's Nikola Jokic and New Orleans' Zion Williamson.

And then the cries of snubbing will begin.

Let's start dissecting this mess with the East. Philadelphia's Joel Embiid is going to be an All-Star reserve, based on both common sense and the fact that NBA coaches wouldn't dare anger one of the league's most hard-to-guard players by not voting for him. Boston's Jaylen Brown, New York's Julius Randle and Miami's Bam Adebayo all should be All-Stars.

That's nine from the East. That leaves no more than three slots left for this group — Atlanta's Trae Young, Chicago's DeMar DeRozan and Zach LaVine, New York's Jalen Brunson, Miami's Jimmy Butler, Orlando's Paolo Banchero, Indiana's Tyrese Haliburton and Cleveland's Darius Garland. And all eight of those guys, plus some others, are worthy candidates.

"Tyrese Haliburton is an artist," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said earlier this season. "And you know, some people that have unconventional ways to be successful in this game, you have to just leave them alone and allow them to do what they do. His artistry is the way he gets the ball in the basket, the way he sees the game, the way he connects teammates and the special person that he is."

Sounds like an All-Star. A lot of coaches can make similar arguments for their guys, and not be lying when they make them.

You can see how messy this is going to get.

It might be even worse out West. Sacramento's Domantas Sabonis, Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Utah's Lauri Markkanen, Memphis' Ja Morant and Portland's Damian Lillard should be locks for reserve nods. The only question on the Lakers'



CRAIG LASSIG/AP

Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards is averaging 25 points a game but is facing a numbers squeeze for a spot for the All-Star Game. He's in competition with Devin Booker and De'Aaron Fox, among others.

Anthony Davis is if missing a bunch of games with injury will weigh on the minds of coaches; his numbers are more than good enough, except for that pesky "games played" column.

If Davis and those five other players make it, that leaves one spot on the West roster. ONE.

Phoenix's Devin Booker is averaging about 27 points a game. Minnesota's Anthony Edwards is averaging about 25 points a game. Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox is averaging about 24. Odds are, at least one of those guys will miss out on being picked Thursday night.

Maybe two. Maybe even all three.

Denver leads the Western Conference and should have more than one All-Star, so that suggests Aaron Gordon — who has been fantastic this season — will get a long look. An All-Star Game without Los Angeles Clippers teammates Paul George and Kawhi Leonard would make no sense, given how they're playing this season. But that could happen. New Orleans' CJ McCollum has averaged nearly 20 points per game in his career, is averaging a tick above that this season, and still hasn't been an All-Star. Coaches had to have considered Phoenix's Chris Paul for their ballots as well.

All we know for certain is there

will be some very good players who didn't make the cut.

There were 56 players who entered this week averaging at least 20 points per game; not all were officially qualified for the NBA scoring-leader list because they hadn't played enough games to be eligible.

Simple math tells us this much: 56 players averaging 20 per game, and 24 spots on the All-Star rosters means at least 32 of those guys are going to be on the outside looking in when the rest of the teams are revealed.

Put it this way: There will be enough "snubbed" guys out there that, if they were so inclined, they could all get together and play their own All-Star Game. And even then there would be a few players who wouldn't make a squad.

Coaches had a tough job to do, narrowing all the worthy candidates for All-Star reserve nods down to seven players from their conferences. A few guys who are left out Thursday will still probably find their way to the game; if anyone who was selected can't play because of injury — Williamson, for example, is currently out with a hamstring problem — then Commissioner Adam Silver will choose replacements.

It'll be an interesting ballot reveal, for certain.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	36	15	.706	—
Philadelphia	32	17	.653	3
Brooklyn	31	19	.620	4½
New York	27	25	.519	9½
Toronto	23	29	.442	13½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	29	23	.558	—
Atlanta	25	26	.490	3½
Washington	24	26	.480	4
Orlando	20	31	.392	8½
Charlotte	15	37	.288	14
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	34	17	.667	—
Cleveland	31	22	.585	4
Indiana	24	28	.462	10½
Chicago	23	27	.460	10½
Detroit	13	39	.250	21½
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	32	18	.640	—
Dallas	27	25	.519	6
New Orleans	26	26	.500	7
San Antonio	14	37	.275	18½
Houston	12	38	.240	20
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	35	16	.686	—
Minnesota	27	26	.509	9
Utah	26	26	.500	9½
Oklahoma City	24	26	.480	10½
Portland	24	26	.480	10½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Sacramento	28	21	.571	—
L.A. Clippers	29	25	.537	1½
Golden State	26	24	.520	2½
Phoenix	27	25	.519	2½
L.A. Lakers	24	28	.462	5½

Monday's games					
Orlando 119, Philadelphia 109	Brooklyn 121, L.A. Lakers 104	Golden State 128, Oklahoma City 120	Washington 127, San Antonio 106	Sacramento 118, Minnesota 111, OT	
Dallas 111, Detroit 105	Phoenix 114, Toronto 106	Portland 129, Atlanta 125			
Tuesday's games					
Miami 100, Cleveland 97	L.A. Clippers 108, Chicago 103	Milwaukee 124, Charlotte 115	L.A. Lakers 129, New York 123, OT	Denver 122, New Orleans 113	
Wednesday's games					
Orlando at Philadelphia	Portland at Memphis	Washington at Detroit	Brooklyn at Boston	Golden State at Minnesota	
Oklahoma City at Houston	Sacramento at San Antonio	Toronto at Utah	Atlanta at Phoenix		
Thursday's games					
L.A. Lakers at Indiana	Memphis at Cleveland	Miami at New York	Charlotte at Chicago	New Orleans at Dallas	
Golden State at Denver	L.A. Clippers at Milwaukee				
Friday's games					
Charlotte at Detroit	Sacramento at Indiana	Portland at Washington	Phoenix at Boston	Toronto at Houston	
Orlando at Minnesota	Philadelphia at San Antonio	Atlanta at Utah			
Saturday's games					
Washington at Brooklyn	Phoenix at Detroit	L.A. Clippers at New York	Portland at Chicago	Miami at Milwaukee	
L.A. Lakers at New Orleans	Houston at Oklahoma City	Dallas at Golden State	Atlanta at Denver		
Leaders Through Tuesday Rebounding					
	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Sabonis, SAC	47	139	442	581	12.4
Antetokmpo, MIL	40	95	392	487	12.2
Gobert, MIN	44	142	375	517	11.8
Adams, MEM	42	214	271	485	11.5



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

The Lakers' LeBron James shoots over the Knicks' RJ Barrett as Jalen Brunson watches during the first half on Tuesday in New York. James had a triple-double and moved ahead of both Mark Jackson and Steve Nash into fourth place on the career assists list.

ROUNDUP

James has triple-double, leads Lakers past Knicks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — LeBron James will soon be the NBA's top scorer, though that was never his focus. He's also one of the game's leading passers, and combining the two — possibly better than anyone ever — is what really makes him proud. "I didn't get to this point in my career by thinking about records or how many points I have, whatever the case might be," James said. "I just play the game the right way. I approach the game every night only trying to be a triple threat by scoring, rebounding, assisting, defending, and may the chips fall where they may." James moved within 89 points of breaking the career scoring record and climbed into fourth place on the assists list, finishing with his first triple-double of the season in his return to Madison Square Garden as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the New York Knicks 129-123 in overtime Tuesday night. James had 28 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds, with the points giving him 38,299 for his career. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is the leader with 38,387. But James' game has always

been about more than scoring, as he proved again Tuesday. He fed Dennis Schroder for a three-pointer that snapped a 118-all tie with 3:13 remaining, grabbed his 10th rebound later in the extra period and then powered to the basket for a 127-121 lead with 19 seconds to go. "He's just doing it all," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said. "That's what great players do. That's what all-time greats do, and he's right up there at the top of the list with all of them." James had earlier moved ahead of Mark Jackson and then Steve Nash into fourth place on the assists list during his first game at Madison Square Garden in three years. Anthony Davis added 27 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who had dropped two straight to open their trip. Both James and Davis had sat out their loss Monday in Brooklyn. Jalen Brunson scored 37 points and Julius Randle had 23 points and 12 rebounds for the Knicks, who were 7-for-34 from three-point range and dropped their second straight. **Nuggets 122, Pelicans 113:** Jamal Murray scored 32 points, Ni-

kola Jokic had his 16th triple-double of the season and host Denver held off reeling New Orleans. Jokic finished with 26 points, 18 rebounds and 15 assists as the Western Conference leaders improved to 16-0 when Jokic has a triple-double. Murray made a season-high seven three-pointers. CJ McCollum and Herbert Jones each scored 21 points for the Pelicans. They have dropped nine straight games to finish 3-13 in January. Standout Zion Williamson has missed 15 straight games with a hamstring injury. **Bucks 124, Hornets 115:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 34 points and 18 rebounds and host Milwaukee beat Charlotte to win its fifth straight. The Bucks withstood a triple-double from Charlotte's LaMelo Ball, who had 27 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds. **Heat 100, Cavaliers 97:** Jimmy Butler scored 23 points, Bam Adebayo added 18 points and 11 rebounds and visiting Miami beat Cleveland. Caleb Martin scored 18 points and matched his career high with 10 rebounds for the Heat, who



Chasing Kareem

A look at LeBron James' pursuit of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the NBA's scoring record. Abdul-Jabbar has held the record since April 5, 1984: **Abdul-Jabbar points:** 38,387. **James points:** 38,299. **Difference:** 88 points. **James' latest game:** He scored 28 points Tuesday night in the Los Angeles Lakers' 129-123 overtime victory at New York. **James' scoring average this season:** 30.2. **Potential record-breaker:** At his current rate of 30.2 points per game, with 89 points needed to pass Abdul-Jabbar, it would take James three more games to become the NBA's scoring leader. Assuming he does not miss any more games, he would be on pace to break the record Feb. 7 at home against Oklahoma City. **Next Lakers game:** Thursday night at Indiana. From The Associated Press moved within 1½ games of the fifth-place Cavs in the Eastern Conference standings. **Clippers 108, Bulls 103:** Kawhi Leonard scored 33 points, Norman Powell added 27 and visiting Los Angeles beat Chicago for its sixth victory in seven games. Nikola Vucevic had 23 points and 14 rebounds for Chicago.

AUTO RACING/NHL



MATT YORK/AP

NASCAR Cup Series driver Ross Chastain speaks during the NASCAR Championship media day on Nov. 3 in Phoenix. NASCAR has essentially banned the “Hail Melon” video-game move Chastain used at Martinsville Speedway to race his way into the championship finale.

NASCAR says Chastain’s Martinsville move illegal

By MARK LONG
Associated Press

NASCAR has essentially banned the “Hail Melon” video-game move driver Ross Chastain used at Martinsville Speedway to race his way into the championship finale.

Chastain last year mashed the gas and deliberately smashed into the wall so that the energy would speed his car past his rivals. The move advanced him into NASCAR’s title-deciding final race and the last of the four spots, and was lauded by motorsports figures globally.

But his fellow NASCAR competitors thought Chastain’s trick was both dangerous and not in the spirit of fair competition. NASCAR on Tuesday said the wall-hugging, jaw-dropping pass Chastain made on the final lap will be a penalty in 2023.

“Not a new rule,” said Elton Sawyer, NASCAR’s vice president of competition. “I think we all remember the last-lap move at Martinsville in the fall. Brought a great deal of excitement, a great deal of exposure to our sport. But it also came with some scrutiny.”

NASCAR cited rule 10.5.2.6.A, which states “any violations deemed to compromise the safety of an event or otherwise pose a dangerous risk to the safety of competitors, officials, spectators or others are treated with the highest degree of seriousness.”

Chastain was on the verge of playoff elimination when he har-

kened to a racing move he used on GameCube with his brother, Chad, as a kid. He plastered his car against the outside wall, let go of the steering wheel and pushed the pedal to the floor.

It worked just like it did in the video game. Suddenly, on the final half-lap at the Martinsville short track, Chastain’s car looked as if it was turned up to hyper-speed while everyone else was poking along.

Going at least 50 mph faster than everyone else, he passed five cars in a matter of seconds to claim the final spot in the title race.

Other notable changes for NASCAR’s Cup Series in 2023:

- Losing a wheel will no longer be a four-race suspension to the crew chief and two crew members. It will be a two-race suspension for two crew members if it happens beyond pit road.

- There will no longer be stage breaks at road courses. NASCAR will still award points at the end of stages, only without the artificial caution.

- NASCAR will give teams seven minutes on pit road to work on their cars if they are damaged in an accident. It was six minutes last year before being increased to 10 minutes for the Cup playoffs.

- Restart zones will be increased by 50% — 25% more room before the start/finish line and 25% more at the end. The rule change goes into effect for the first five events of the season and will be reevaluated from there.

- NASCAR removed the top-30-in-points requirement for drivers trying to make the playoffs. Drivers will still be required to participate in every event unless granted a waiver (typically for an injury).

- NASCAR will use new recording systems in cars that will provide more powerful crash data. It’s a significant upgrade from the black box technology first used in 2002 following Dale Earnhardt’s death at Daytona International Speedway.

- NASCAR will have a “large increase” in the number of drivers who will wear mouth-piece sensors at races. They were not available at every event in 2022 but will be beginning in 2023. Data recorders measure what cars experience; this would provide data directly from drivers and what they go through during races, specifically in crashes.

- NASCAR officially designated eight locations at which wet-weather packages (rain tires) will be available in 2023: the LA Coliseum (the Clash), Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis, Martinsville, Milwaukee, New Hampshire, North Wilkesboro (All-Star race), Phoenix and Richmond. NASCAR will have “rain” tires and teams will be required to have windshield wiper hookups and rear lights in case NASCAR wants to race in damp conditions for the Clash, Martinsville, New Hampshire, North Wilkesboro, Phoenix and Richmond.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	50	38	7	5	81	187	109
Toronto	51	31	12	8	70	173	136
Tampa Bay	48	32	15	1	65	175	141
Buffalo	49	26	19	4	56	185	165
Florida	52	24	22	6	54	178	183
Ottawa	50	24	23	3	51	151	159
Detroit	48	21	19	8	50	145	160
Montreal	51	20	27	4	44	134	189

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	50	33	9	8	74	168	135
New Jersey	49	32	13	4	68	171	131
N.Y. Rangers	49	27	14	8	62	157	129
Washington	53	27	20	6	60	166	152
Pittsburgh	49	24	16	9	57	161	153
N.Y. Islanders	52	25	22	5	55	148	144
Philadelphia	51	21	21	9	51	142	162
Columbus	51	15	32	4	34	131	198

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	51	28	13	10	66	173	133
Winnipeg	52	32	19	1	65	167	137
Minnesota	48	27	17	4	58	151	138
Colorado	48	27	18	3	57	151	133
Nashville	48	24	18	6	54	137	141
St. Louis	51	23	25	3	49	156	185
Arizona	50	16	28	6	38	131	177
Chicago	48	15	29	4	34	118	176

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	49	29	15	5	63	177	151
Los Angeles	53	28	18	7	63	173	183
Vegas	51	29	18	4	62	160	148
Edmonton	50	28	18	4	60	187	163
Calgary	50	24	17	9	57	160	153
Vancouver	49	20	26	3	43	166	196
San Jose	51	15	25	11	41	157	196
Anaheim	50	16	29	5	37	125	205

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.

Tuesday’s games

Ottawa 5, Montreal 4
Carolina 5, Los Angeles 4, OT
Washington 4, Columbus 3, OT

Wednesday’s games

Boston at Toronto
Carolina at Buffalo

Thursday’s games

No games scheduled

Friday’s games

No games scheduled

Saturday’s games

Central All-Stars at Pacific All-Stars
Metropolitan All-Stars at Atlantic All-Stars

Scoring leaders

Through Tuesday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	50	41	51	92
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	48	29	47	76
Nikita Kucherov, TB	48	19	53	72
David Pastrnak, BOS	50	38	33	71

NHL ROUNDUP

Aho lifts Carolina over LA

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Sebastian Aho scored on a power play with 53.8 seconds left in overtime and Carolina rallied to beat Los Angeles, 5-4.

Brent Burns, Paul Stastny, Jordan Staal and Teuvo Teravainen also scored for the Hurricanes, who trailed 4-1 entering the third period. Andrei Svechnikov had two assists and Frederik Andersen stopped 17 shots.

Adrian Kempe scored twice and Kevin Fiala and Anze Kopitar added goals for the Kings, who scored all four of their goals in the second period. Kopitar and Drew Doughty each had two assists, and Phoenix Copley made 26 saves.

Capitals 4, Blue Jackets 3 (OT): Evgeny Kuznetsov scored 26 seconds into overtime, and visiting Washington extended its lead over Pittsburgh for fourth place in the Metropolitan Division.

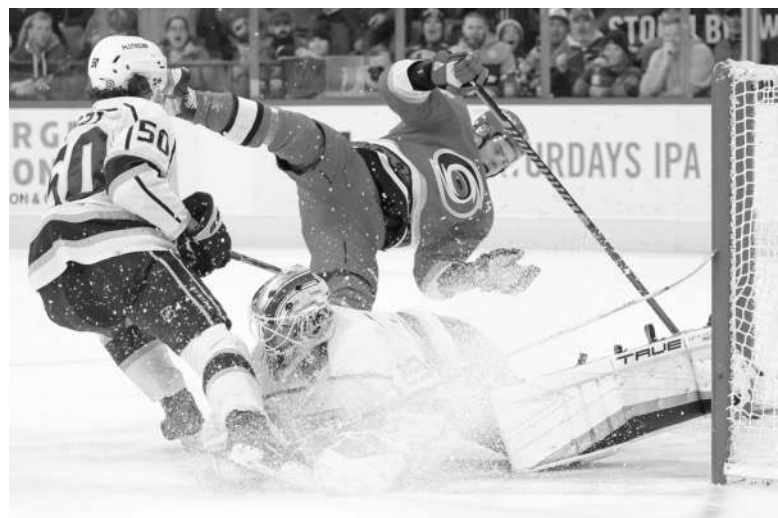
Trevor van Riemsdyk scored twice, Garnet Hathaway added a goal and Kuznetsov also contributed an assist. Charlie Lindgren stopped 31 shots.

Andrew Peeke, Eric Robinson and Johnny Gaudreau scored for Columbus.

Ottawa 5, Canadiens 4: Brady Tkachuk scored at 18:41 of the third period and visiting Ottawa extended its winning streak to four.

Tim Stutzle scored two goals and added two assists, while Alex DeBrincat and Claude Giroux also found the back of the net for the Senators. Anton Forsberg made 28 saves.

Rafael Harvey-Pinard kept the Canadiens in the game with two third-period goals. Kirby Dach and Mike Hoffman also scored for Montreal.



KARL B DEBLAKER/AP

The Carolina Hurricanes’ Sebastian Aho trips over Los Angeles Kings goaltender Phoenix Copley with Sean Durzi nearby during the third period Tuesday in Raleigh, N.C. The Hurricanes won 5-4.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Kansas guard Dajuan Harris Jr. puts up a shot against Kansas State on Tuesday in Lawrence, Kan.

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

No. 8 Kansas avenges prior loss to No. 7 Kansas State

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Jalen Wilson remembers every slight. Every criticism. Every chip that's landed on his shoulder.

You can bet the Kansas forward remembers watching Kansas State fans storm the court after beating the Jayhawks.

So with revenge on their mind, Wilson and his pals jumped on the seventh-ranked Wildcats in the rematch Tuesday night. He finished with 20 points, Kevin McCullar Jr. had 16 points and 13 rebounds, and the No. 8 Jayhawks rolled to a 90-78 victory that also tightened the Big 12 standings at the midway point of conference play.

"It was like a big rub in our face, them storming the court," Wilson admitted. "I always remember stuff like that."

Dajuan Harris Jr. added 18 points for the Jayhawks (18-4, 6-3), who built a 12-point halftime lead before coasting to their 17th straight home win over K-State. They also won their second straight after a three-game skid, and made sure to avoid taking back-to-back losses inside Allen Fieldhouse for the first time since the 1988-89 season.

"Hey, their guys are hard to guard. They've got a good team," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "I actually thought we did a good job, for the most part, and our bench was terrific. That was the best our bench has played so far."

Markquis Nowell scored 23 points and Keyontae Johnson had 22 points and 12 boards to lead the Wildcats (18-4, 6-3), who were trying for their first regular-season

sweep of their biggest rival in four decades.

Nae'Qwan Tomlin added 11 points for Kansas State. David N'Guessan had 10.

"They play at a fast pace. You know they play better at home," Nowell said. "They started early with turnovers. They got out in transition. They got the crowd involved. They had a huge first half and I feel like we dug ourselves a hole."

No. 4 Alabama 101, Vanderbilt 44: Brandon Miller scored 22 points to help the host Crimson Tide rout the Commodores for the their largest margin of victory over an SEC opponent ever.

Alabama (19-3, 9-0 SEC) shot 59% from the field and 46% from three-point range to pull off the fourth-largest win in school history.

Nimari Burnett added 16 points, his first points after three scoreless games since returning from injury on Jan. 21. Three more Alabama players cracked double-digit points: Rylan Griffen with 12, Noah Gurley with 11 and Charles Bediako with 10.

No. 15 TCU 76, West Virginia 72: Damion Baugh had 16 points and 10 assists, big man Eddie Lampkin Jr. made an unexpected return from injury and the host Horned Frogs overcame the absence of top scorer Mike Miles Jr. to beat the Mountaineers.

JaKobe Coles had 17 points, Shaha Wells 16 points and Xavier Cork 15 for TCU (17-5, 6-3 Big 12), which wrapped up the first half of its conference schedule in a four-way tie with No. 7 Kansas State, No.

8 Kansas and No. 13 Iowa State for second place. They are all one game behind league-leading No. 10 Texas.

Boston College 62, No. 20 Clemson 54: Makai Ashton-Langford had two key driving baskets in the closing two minutes and finished with 15 points to help the host Eagles beat the Tigers.

Jaeden Zackery added 13 points for Boston College (11-12, 5-7 Atlantic Coast Conference). BC held Clemson to one field goal — and that came with 18 seconds left — in the final 13:16.

Maryland 66, No. 21 Indiana 55: Jahmir Young scored 20 points, Donta Scott added 19 and the host Terrapins snapped the Hoosiers' five-game winning streak.

Maryland (15-7, 6-5 Big Ten) gave its NCAA Tournament hopes another boost, adding a victory over Indiana (15-7, 6-5) to a résumé that already included wins over Miami, Illinois and Ohio State. The Terps are 12-1 at home in Kevin Willard's first season as coach.

Nevada 75, No. 22 San Diego State 66: Jarod Lucas scored 26 points and Will Baker had 19 points and eight rebounds as the host Wolf Pack beat the Aztecs.

No. 23 Miami 92, Virginia Tech 83: Nigel Pack scored 17 points in a 5-minute span late in the second half, and the Hurricanes stayed unbeaten at home this season by topping the Hokies.

No. 24 UConn 90, DePaul 76: Jordan Hawkins scored 26 points, Adama Sanogo had 25 and the visiting Huskies beat the Blue Demons.

Jitoboh's recovery back in focus after eye injury

By MARK LONG

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Jason Jitoboh won't step foot onto a basketball court without his glasses. And he doesn't even need them to see.

The darkened lenses merely provide extra protection for what eyesight Jitoboh has left.

Florida's 6-foot-11 center took a finger to his left eye at Tennessee last January and spent the better part of a year trying to get right. He's had four surgeries already and might have a fifth following the season.

So when the Gators (12-9, 5-3 Southeastern Conference) hosted the second-ranked Volunteers (18-3, 7-1) on Wednesday night, Jitoboh was focused on finding some closure on a trying and unexpected journey that started with a routine rebounding effort during a mid-week game in Knoxville and continues a little more than 12 months later.

"I've had this game marked for a while," Jitoboh said.

For good reason. Jitoboh left his last outing against the Vols bloodied and unable to see in one eye. He had surgery the next morning to repair a ruptured muscle that had prevented any eye movement. He had several more operations to repair a detached retina and optic nerve damage.

Adding to disorientation and discomfort, doctors dropped protective oil into his healing eye and ordered him to lay face down for roughly 20 hours a day for three months. He would spend 50 minutes with his head in a massage pillow and then get a 10-minute break during which he'd try to cram in all his normal activities.

"I would've gone crazy if I did that all day," Jitoboh said. "So I tried to find loopholes. I'd stand up and look down. It was just finding different ways to heal and also live life."

With his parents living in Abuja, Nigeria, and unable to get to Gainesville on short notice, Jitoboh relied on head athletic trainer Duke Werner for moral support.

"He got to the point where he didn't know if he wanted to play again," Werner said. "He got really down. ... There's been a real toll on this guy that people probably don't realize. It was serious."

Jitoboh missed the final 14 games last season. His sight slowly started to return a few weeks after the injury. He could make out shapes, then colors. His peripheral vision returned, too, but his straight-ahead sight in that eye remained foggy for months—even to this day.

"It's been a long process, long journey for sure," said Jitoboh, whose mother was able to join him in Gainesville for two weeks around his third surgery. "I think I'm most proud of not giving up, my resiliency, not just laying down and not letting it change my character, who I am as a person. I think that's what I'm most proud of."

"What I did is almost impossible. It would've been easier to lay down and give up and just let the obstacle win."

Jitoboh missed an entire semester of coursework because he couldn't look at a computer screen, and he packed on a few extra pounds because he was unable to work out, let alone practice.

He eventually gained clearance to return to the court in short stints last May, but "my depth perception was horrible." Catching the ball was difficult, and running without losing his balance was nearly impossible.

Over time, as his workload increased, his brain started suppressing his left eye and recalibrating everything he does through the right one. He's still a work in progress, coming off the bench to spell Colin Castleton and averaging 2.7 points and 1.5 rebounds while playing a little less than 10 minutes a game.

But considering where he was a year ago, he'll take it.

"Not a lot of guys can go through what he's been through," Castleton said. "The biggest thing for me that really shocked me was just the approach he took every day, having a great, positive mindset. He has great energy."



MATT STAMEY/AP

Florida center Jason Jitoboh runs up the court after making a shot against Alabama during the first half on Jan. 5 in Gainesville, Fla.

SPORTS



Closing in on Kareem

LeBron throws down triple-double, edges closer to scoring leader » **NBA, Page 21**

NFL

Brady retires again

Seven-time Super Bowl winner insists this time it's 'for good'

BY FRED GOODALL
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — This time, Tom Brady says he's done for good.

The seven-time Super Bowl winner with New England and Tampa Bay announced his retirement from the NFL on Wednesday, exactly one year after first saying his playing days were over, by posting a brief video lasting just under one minute on social media.

Unlike last winter, though, the most successful quarterback in league history, as well as one of the greatest athletes in team sports, said his decision was final.

"Tom's legacy is unmatched in the history of this game."

Jason Licht
Buccaneers GM

"Good morning guys. I'll get to the point right away," Brady says as the message begins. "I'm retiring. For good."

He briefly retired after the 2021 season but wound up coming back for one more year with the Buccaneers. He retires at age 45, the owner of virtually every meaningful NFL passing record in an unprecedented 23-year career.

A year ago when he retired, it was in the form of a long Instagram post. But about six weeks later, he decided to return for one more run, citing "unfinished business" after an early playoff exit.

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Tom Brady is the NFL's career leader in yards passing (89,214) and touchdowns (649). He is the only player to win more than five Super Bowls and has been MVP of the game five times.

MARK LOMOGLIO/AP



Kansas avenges earlier loss to K-State » College basketball, Page 23

