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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas



PRAKASH SINGH/TNS

Staff unloads COVID-19 relief supplies from the U.S. at the Indira Gandhi International Airport cargo terminal in New Delhi on Friday.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Moving to help

US sends transport planes with supplies to India as pandemic ravages nation

By ELLEN WULFHORST
New York Daily News

The U.S. has sent a number of large military transport planes loaded with supplies, including desperately needed oxygen, to India for its lethal battle against COVID-19, a top security official said Sunday.

India is home to more than a third of the world's new COVID-19 cases, according to U.S. officials, and that grim tally soared to a new peak Saturday, with 401,993 cases recorded after a 10-day stretch of more than 300,000 daily cases.

Overwhelmed hospitals are turning away sick patients, with supplies of oxygen and medicine running low, and skies are smoke-filled from crematoriums working around the clock to burn the bod-

SEE HELP ON PAGE 7

Lawmakers tee up proposals to improve military child care

By SARAH CAMMARATA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers are teeing up legislative proposals that would tackle child care problems in the military, as thousands of children remain on month-long waitlists and the Defense Department's backlog to repair existing facilities swells.

The Defense Department, along with experts and military advocacy groups, have recognized high-quality child care as a retention and readiness issue for service members. The coronavirus pandemic also has exacerbated the problem, as some child

FAILING GRADE

A Defense Department report in June 2020 on its child development programs found out of 761 child development centers, 378 are in "good" condition, while 135 are in "poor" or "failing" condition due to the high cost of repairs and deferred maintenance.

SOURCE: Stars and Stripes

care centers and schools remain shuttered, blocking access to after-school care too.

The inability to access affordable and quality child care can impact a service member's ability to report for duty and his

or her decision to stay in the military, and it also can be a barrier to spouse unemployment and hurts the overall well-being of military families, experts said.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said she will introduce a proposal in mid-May with Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., that requires the Defense Department to conduct a review on its child care centers, including examining their conditions, establishing a plan to modernize them and finding ways to expand capacity.

"There has been a lack of recognition that when a service member serves, so does his or her family. ... We're elevating this issue,

and we're going to get everyone's attention and we're going to get them to respond," said Speier, chairwoman of the military personnel subpanel of the House Armed Services Committee.

A Defense Department report in June 2020 on its child development programs found out of 761 child development centers, 378 are in "good" condition, while 135 are in "poor" or "failing" condition due to the high cost of repairs and deferred maintenance.

"Failing to me suggests that there might even be environmental conditions that are

SEE IMPROVE ON PAGE 6

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Delta last to end social distancing on flights

The Washington Post

Saturday marked the end of a pandemic era in the air: no more social distancing on flights.

Delta was the final holdout, ending its practice of blocking middle seats on Saturday. That is more than a year after the airline first introduced the practice as the coronavirus cratered the number of air travelers.

Other major U.S. carriers have long since returned to full flights. American and United

starting selling all their seats last summer. Southwest started doing the same in December, and Alaska Airlines and Jet-Blue followed in January.

Delta announced at the end of March that it would make all seats available for flights starting May 1. One key factor, chief executive Ed Bastian said, was that the airline believed nearly 65% of those who flew with Delta in 2019 expected to have at least one dose of a vaccine by the beginning of May.

“While Delta’s decision to block middle seats has given many customers a reason to choose Delta over the past year, the signature hospitality of our employees and the experiences they deliver to customers every day have also deepened their trust in our airline,” Bastian said in an announcement.

During an earnings call in mid-April, Bastian said the change would provide “a powerful tool for improving our financial performance.”

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (May 4)	\$1.18
Dollar buys (May 4)	0.8086
British pound (May 4)	\$1.36
Japanese yen (May 4)	106.00
South Korean won (May 4)	1,089.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
Britain (Pound)	1.3904
Canada (Dollar)	1.2289
China (Yuan)	6.4737
Denmark (Krone)	6.1658
Egypt (Pound)	15.6577
Euro	0.8291
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7674
Hungary (Forint)	298.46
Israel (Shekel)	3.2455
Japan (Yen)	109.15
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3013
Norway (Krone)	8.2910
Philippines (Peso)	48.05
Poland (Zloty)	3.77
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7498
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3303

South Korea (Won)	1,122.33
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9118
Thailand (Baht)	31.15
Turkey (New Lira)	8,2928

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

INTEREST RATES

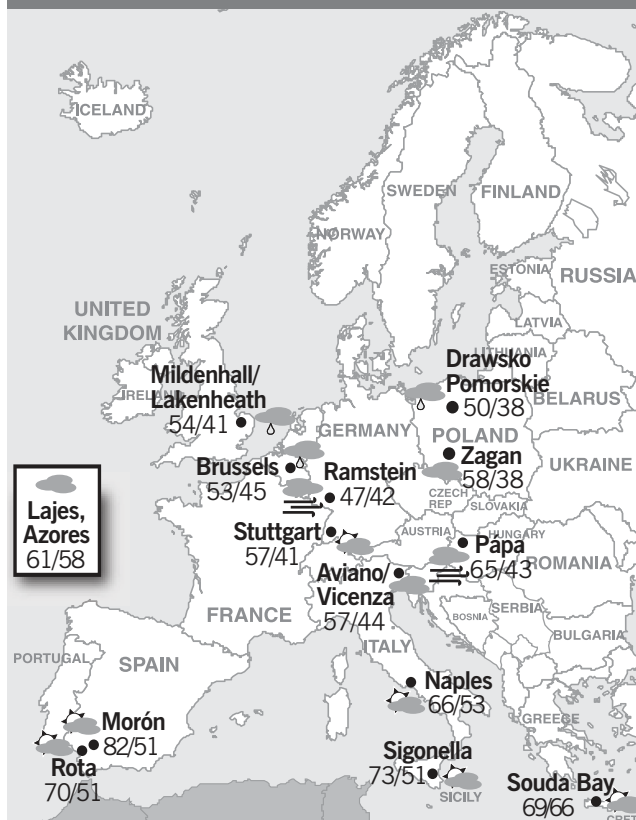
Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.07
3-month bill	0.01
30-year bond	2.30

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



TUESDAY IN EUROPE



WEDNESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

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MILITARY

Trans troops cheer reversal of ban

Those who meet military standards can enlist and serve openly

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Maj. Alivia Stehlik's fears that transgender soldiers would be kicked out of the Army faded Friday as former President Donald Trump's regulations were overturned. Those who meet military standards are once again allowed to enlist and serve openly.

But the policy change — announced in March by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and taking effect Friday — won't erase Stehlik's memories of how she said she felt while serving as a transgender woman in Afghanistan in 2018 when the White House initiated moves to bar most transgender people from serving.

Trump argued on Twitter that transgender service members' medical costs were a drain on the military and said they would no longer be allowed to serve "in any capacity."

But those who worked with Stehlik in Afghanistan said her service was proof that wasn't true.

"Nobody can argue with her that a trans person can't deploy and effectively do their job in theater, because she literally just did it," said physical therapy tech Staff Sgt. Logan Haller, Stehlik's enlisted partner on her 2018-2019 deployment to Afghanistan.

Senior U.S. lawmakers agreed, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi saying when the Trump ban took effect in March last year: "No one with the strength and bravery to serve in the U.S. military should be turned away because of who they are."

Stehlik, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and Army Ranger School who served as an infantry officer, fought against the ban. She advocated for the military to go back to the policy endorsed by then-President Barack Obama in 2016, which lifted a nearly 60-year prohibition on transgender service members serving openly.

"Being trans should never be a thing that limits anyone," Stehlik told Stars and Stripes in a Facebook messenger call from Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, Colo., where she is now based.

Stehlik started transitioning in 2016 and began hormone replacement therapy the following year. She came out publicly in May 2017 and a few months later, she volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan as a physical therapist with the 1st



Photos by Sara Skiles

Then-Capt. Alivia Stehlik, right, a transgender service member, and Capt. Sara Skiles deployed to Afghanistan in 2018. A reversal of a ban by the Trump administration on transgender troops serving in the military took effect on Friday.



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Stehlik, left, testified on Capitol Hill in Washington on Feb. 27, 2019, about the U.S. military's policy on transgender service members.

Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

She worried about being accepted by her new unit, she said. Haller admitted he had his doubts about whether transgender soldiers would be able to balance their medical needs with deployment to a combat zone.

"One of the big questions that a lot of people had about the whole issue of trans service members was, 'Are they deployable?'" Haller said. "That was one of the questions I had, too, like, on a personal level ... How much sense does that make for the military, and how do we reconcile that with what the Army needs?"

During her deployment to Afghanistan, Stehlik treated about 1,700 troops for injuries. While most of them welcomed her ability to heal them, reduce pain and prevent them from being sent back home, some objected to her being transgender, said Capt. Sara Skiles, an Army social worker deployed to Afghanistan at the same time as Stehlik who traveled with her to bases around the country.

Early in Stehlik's deployment, for example, some soldiers at Camp Dahlke, about 60 miles south of Kabul, didn't want to be touched by a transgender physical therapist, Spc. Steven Scott said.

"There were some soldiers who



Stehlik provides physical therapy for a soldier while deployed to Afghanistan in 2018.

were apprehensive," said Scott, whose job in an artillery battery included hefting heavy shells, which led to back issues. "Artillery just introduced females a few years ago. So there's a lot of people in artillery who are not used to working with females, let alone transgender."

But after Stehlik successfully reduced Scott's chronic back pain, word of her therapy skills spread. The next time she visited the base, soldiers were lined up, waiting for her to treat them, Scott said.

"She's willing to step up and do the right thing, even when it's difficult," Haller said. "And part of that is treating the people who are

maybe a little sketched out by her being trans, or the people who maybe disagree with how she lives her life. She's still like, 'I'm here to be a good human and take care of you and do what I can to make you better.'"

The number of service members who identify as transgender ranges from 1,000 to 8,000, the director of military accession policy at the Pentagon, Stephanie Miller, told reporters in March.

A 2016 Rand Corp. report said the estimated 2,450 transgender personnel on active duty would minimally affect military readiness because only a tiny percentage would access transition-related health care each year.

But over the years, transgender service members have suffered discrimination, fought psychological trauma and sometimes been forced out of the military.

Jamie Ewing, who was in Afghanistan as a contractor when Stehlik was there, was kicked out of the Army in 2013 because she was transgender, after serving for more than five years.

Army Staff Sgt. Dianna Nazzal, who was transitioning while deployed in 2018, said she struggled with feelings of worthlessness and fears that she could be sent home as Trump changed policies.

When President Joe Biden announced March 31 that the ban would be lifted, Ewing said she hoped to rejoin the military, and Nazzal urged Congress to pass a law to make military service by transgender people less precarious and subject to constant change.

Stehlik met the two and another trans service member over dinner in Afghanistan. "Working as ourselves in the midst of this political climate ... like, whoa, we're doing the things that people are literally saying it's impossible for us to do," Stehlik said. "And we're here, kind of against all odds, doing great work."

Stehlik said she was overjoyed and recalled how, as an infantry officer straight out of West Point, she had to pretend to be someone she wasn't and believed that she didn't fit in. After coming out and transitioning, she was free to be a better soldier and care for others, she said. Few people seemed to care "that I'm trans or a girl or whatever."

"They just care that I'm here and I'm a good physical therapist," Stehlik said. To be allowed to be herself around fellow soldiers, "that was this kind of magical, overwhelming feeling, like, 'Oh, I do belong here. These are my people.'"

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WAR/MILITARY

Pararescueman helped save 6 amid cache blasts

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A series of blasts in a cache of seized Taliban rocket-propelled grenades threw three Green Berets several feet, and then the gear they were wearing began to burn, setting off ammunition in rifle magazines.

Special Forces soldiers were sifting through a munitions cache seized in a school Taliban militants had used as a base, when suddenly a blast ripped through the stockpile and hurled the soldiers several feet.

The flames then ignited some of the Green Berets' gear and set off ammunition in their rifle magazines.

"The first thing that comes to mind is fire," said Staff Sgt. Michael Rogers, a pararescueman who treated seven people wounded in the 2019 blast, later found to be the result of a partner force member's negligent weapon discharge. "There were so many things covered in fuel and burning. It looked apocalyptic."

Rogers, now with the 57th Rescue Squadron at Aviano Air Base in Italy, is scheduled to receive the 2021 Air Force Sergeants Association William H. Pitsenbarger Heroism Award in July for his treatment of the wounded. The award is named for a pararescueman who earned the Medal of Honor for aiding soldiers during a Vietnam fire-

fight in 1966.

Rogers' experience as a mountain guide and paramedic in Wyoming suited him well when he joined the Air Force in October 2014, weeks after his honeymoon. He completed the pararescue program in 18 months, though it normally takes three years, and deployed to Afghanistan in 2017, the Air Force said in a statement last week.

On his second deployment in 2019, he was working alongside a Special Forces unit that was supporting Afghan forces in an area under a concentrated Taliban attack.

"We were just trying to focus on a few districts that were holes for drugs and equipment, and prevent that from continuing to worsen," he said in the statement, which did not name the area, though it appears to have been northern Kunduz province.

His team typically spent 16 hours on foot or in vehicles and conducted their raids at night, he said.

"Right toward the end of our time there, we had a village that previously received a really bad ambush," Rogers said. "We counted over 20 rocket-propelled grenades that were fired at our convoy, and two RPGs went right across the hood of our vehicle as we were trying to return fire."

Locals told them a school nearby

was a Taliban headquarters, and it was there the U.S. and Afghan forces found "piles and piles of radio equipment and different kinds of electronics, Taliban propaganda and about 50 to 60 pounds of homemade explosives," along with ammunition, mortars and "stacks of rocket boosters," Rogers said.

A few team members sorted through it all after asking Rogers and others to leave, likely saving their lives.

"All of a sudden we saw a flash and heard two bangs," he said. "We then felt the concussive force from the explosion and immediately thought we were under attack, so we prepared to fire back."

After realizing it wasn't an ambush, Rogers began mass casualty procedures with the Green Beret team's medic.

"The engineer was blown over and down into a ditch and appeared to be unconscious," he said. "The communications sergeant was set on fire with RPG fuel after it exploded near him."

Rogers found the team's intelligence sergeant on the other side of the stockpile, where he'd been blown two meters from the initial blast and was in "bad shape," said the Air Force statement, which identified the Green Berets only by their specialties.

Soon the intelligence sergeant's gear also ignited. The communica-

tions sergeant removed the intelligence sergeant's burning radio, reigniting RPG fuel on his own equipment that he'd put out moments earlier. Rogers ripped off the intelligence sergeant's gear and grenades and threw it.

A tactical air control party member arrived and helped apply tourniquets to three of the intelligence sergeant's bleeding limbs. Explosions continued in the stockpile, so the group used their bodies to shield their patient.

Rogers coordinated an evacuation and treated six other teammates. It took more than an hour for the medevac to arrive and take them to a German surgical center.

Later that night, the Special Forces soldier died. Rogers stayed by his side through the night as his team came to pay their respects.

The Air Force statement did not name the Green Beret who died and officials at Aviano Air Base, where Rogers serves, could not provide further information. But the description of events fits details the military has released about the death of Sgt. 1st Class Michael Goble, 33, in Kunduz province on Dec. 23, 2019.

Goble, of Bergen County, N.J., was a member of 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), based at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. He was on his final deployment and slated to return home in a month.

He was survived by his daughter, Zoey, and partner, Jennifer Albuquerque.

"The intelligence sergeant was an ultimate professional," Rogers said. "He's definitely the best intel operator I've ever known. He was key to ours and the Afghan's success that winter. Being able to hold that region ... a large portion of it was due to his efforts."

Goble was one of the last U.S. fatalities in Afghanistan before Washington reached an agreement with the Taliban in February 2020 leading to the ongoing withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces.

An investigation would later rule that a partner forces member's accidental weapon discharge into the RPG stockpile caused the blast, the Air Force said, providing few details. U.S. Army Special Operations Command could not answer questions about the inquiry last week.

The incident gave Rogers a greater sense of the sacrifices his colleagues have made, he said.

"Everybody that was there was passionate about their job and doing it right," he said. "This loss wrecked our team. Losing families, losing a brother. Those men I was with are our absolute heroes, and I would fight alongside them any day, anywhere."

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Bomb explodes near west Afghan school, wounds 21

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A bomb exploded near a school in western Afghanistan on Monday wounding 21 people, many of them young students, a provincial official said.

Ambulances rushed to the site and took the wounded to nearby hospitals, said Abdul Jabar Shahiq, head of the health department in Farah province. At least 10 of the wounded were students at the school between the ages of 7 and 13, he said. He added that three of the wounded were in

critical condition.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, though Taliban insurgents have a presence in the region.

The bombing came three days after a powerful suicide truck bomb struck a guesthouse in eastern Afghanistan, killing 21 people and wounding 90 others. Most of the casualties in that attack in Lagor province were high school students. No one has claimed responsibility for the late Friday night bombing in Pul-e-Alam, the capital of Logar.

The attack comes two days after the remaining 2,500 to 3,500 American troops officially began leaving the country. They will be out by Sept. 11 at the latest. The pullout comes amid a resurgent Taliban, who control or hold sway over half of Afghanistan.

The top U.S. military officer said Sunday that Afghan government forces face an uncertain future and possibly some "bad possible outcomes" against Taliban insurgents as the withdrawal accelerates in the coming weeks.



RAHMAT GUL/AP

A U.S. plane flies over Bagram Airfield in northern Kabul, Afghanistan, on Monday. Attacks persist around the country as U.S. troops begin their withdrawal.

173rd Airborne Brigade soldier killed in Vicenza car crash

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — A 173rd Airborne Brigade soldier was killed Saturday night in a car crash near Caserma Ederle, the brigade said Monday.

Pfc. Ian N. Morosoff, 19, an infantryman with Company B, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, died at the scene of his injuries.

Two other paratroopers in the collision were taken to the emergency room and released a few hours later. They were expected to make a full re-

covery, the brigade said. Neither of the two injured soldiers were identified.

The incident, which occurred shortly after a 10 p.m. curfew in place because of coronavirus restrictions, is under investigation by U.S. and Italian authorities.

It appeared that the SUV had hit a parked car, a light pole and a sign before rolling over and coming to rest on its roof in front of a pharmacy, the newspaper *Giornale di Vicenza* reported. Although fire and rescue personnel were quick to the scene and

worked to revive Morosoff, "there was nothing (they could) do," the report said.

Capt. David Tarsa, Morosoff's company commander, said that Morosoff had recently arrived at the company but had an impact through his positive attitude and showed "extreme promise for service as a paratrooper."

"We pass our sincere condolences to the Morosoff family following Ian's passing," Tarsa said in a statement.

Staff Sgt. Cody Whitlock, Morosoff's squad leader, also praised the

young paratrooper.

"Since the moment he arrived, he conveyed sincere interests in service to his country," Whitlock said in the statement. "From encouraging those around him to be the best versions of themselves, to being a friend who was willing to talk at a moment's notice, we will always remember Ian as a beloved member of our team."

The transfer of Morosoff's remains to the United States is underway and a memorial service is being planned, the brigade said.

Morosoff was from Suquamish,

Wash., and joined the Army last year. The brigade was his first posting after finishing basic training and airborne school. He is survived by his father Rudy, mother Sarah and brother, Isaac.

His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon and the Parachutist Badge.

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PACIFIC



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

A golfer watches a UH-1N Iroquois helicopter land near the golf course at Tama Hills Recreation Area in western Tokyo on Saturday.

USAF lands Huey on Tokyo golf course helipad for 1st time in years

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TAMA HILLS RECREATION AREA, Japan — Golf balls whizzed harmlessly below a UH-1N Iroquois on Saturday as the helicopter circled over a golf course used by the U.S. military in western Tokyo.

The Huey, from the 459th Airlift Squadron out of nearby Yokota Air Base, touched down on a giant white “H” beside a driving range. The emergency landing zone test marked the first time an aircraft had landed there in four decades, according to the Air Force.

A crowd of curious golfers watched from a parking lot and then posed for photographs as the aircraft idled on the pad.

“The reason we came down here was to showcase the landing zone here at Tama Hills,” Tech. Sgt. Alexandra Vidato, a flight engineer, said after exiting the Huey. “We would use it for any sort of emergency for Yokota or the local community.”

The Air Force dubbed the golf course landing “Operation Tamadachi” — a play on Operation Tomodachi, the humanitarian response involving 24,000 U.S.



A UH-1N Iroquois helicopter tests an emergency landing zone at nearby Tama Hills Recreation Area.

troops to the earthquake and tsunami that struck northeast Japan on March 11, 2011.

The Tama Hills landing zone, about 18 miles west of Tokyo’s Shinjuku ward, hasn’t been used in about 40 years, Vidato said.

Yokota’s Hueys typically fly to places such as Hardy Barracks — Stars and Stripes’ Pacific headquarters in Tokyo’s Roppongi district — as well as Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Camp Zama, home to U.S. Army Japan in Kanagawa prefecture.

Their mission includes air medevac, air ambulance, search and

Get a bird’s eye view of the landing at: [stripes.com/go/landing](https://www.stripes.com/go/landing)

rescue and operational support airlift.

The Tama helipad is close to a residential neighborhood next to the golf course.

“It’s a fairly tight LZ,” Vidato said. “We call it a restricted landing zone.”

A passenger on the helicopter, Tama’s head golf professional, Patrick Bowman, had a bird’s eye view of the course on his way to work.

“We don’t expect this to be an every day thing,” he said after clambering out of the Huey.

Tama Hills is revitalizing its infrastructure, which included repainting the helipad, Bowman said.

During the flight, he could see golf balls flying through the air below, he said.

“It felt like being a hawk ... a Tama Hawk,” he said, referring to a youth golf team that he captains.

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US military has few virus cases; Japan sees rise

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The spring coronavirus surge continued Monday in Japan’s two largest cities, where emergency restrictions dampened the traditional weeklong vacation period for many Japanese.

In Osaka prefecture, Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura called on people to stay home during Golden Week, the period ending Wednesday, and cited overburdened medical facilities due to record-breaking new case numbers, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Tokyo reported 708 newly infected people Monday, according to NHK. On Saturday, the city reported 1,050, according to metro government data. About 833 people test positive in the city each day, according to the seven-day rolling average.

The U.S. military in Japan and South Korea reported six new COVID-19 cases between Saturday and Monday. In contrast to Japan, which has vaccinated less than 2% of its population, U.S. bases are ramping up vaccination clinics and urging all eligible adults over age 18 to get inoculated.

U.S. Forces Japan reported 47 COVID-19 patients at 10 installations across Japan on April 27.

Sasebo Naval Base, on the southern island of Kyushu, reported via Facebook on Sunday that two people tested positive during a medical screening and were quarantined.

The Marine Corps had three new COVID-19 patients between Saturday and Monday, one each at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and Camps Hansen and Courtney, according to a Face-

book post by Marine Corps Installations Pacific on Monday.

Osaka, the second-largest metropolitan area in Japan, has reported more than 1,000 new COVID-19 patients on 12 of the 14 days ending Sunday, according to the prefecture’s online database. Monday’s report was unavailable.

Yoshimura may ask the national government to extend the state of emergency in Osaka beyond its May 11 expiration date, according to NHK. The emergency includes neighboring Kyoto and Hyogo prefectures and Tokyo. Business hours are limited in those areas, mass transit schedules in Tokyo are reduced and employees are encouraged to telework.

Previous emergency declarations in Japan lacked teeth, but a new law passed during the pandemic put some enforcement power behind the measures.

In South Korea, one soldier from the Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army tested positive Thursday after returning from leave, according to a U.S. Forces Korea news release Friday. The soldier is in quarantine at Camp Humphreys.

A spring surge is doubling the number of new COVID-19 patients in places across South Korea. Numbers there are the highest they’ve been since January.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 488 new COVID-19 patients Sunday across the country. Seoul accounted for 123 cases and Gyeonggi province, where Humphreys is located, reported 129.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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Navy, Marine exchanges on Guam open to some civilian workers

By DANIEL BETANCOURT
Stars and Stripes

Some civilians working for the Defense Department and Coast Guard on Guam may now shop at Navy and Marine Corps exchanges, thanks to a DOD order issued last month.

As of Saturday, non-appropriated and appropriated fund employees have privileges at the Navy and Marine Corps exchanges at installations in the U.S. and its territories and possessions, according to a Navy news release. The exchanges are also gearing up to provide online shop-

ping access by mid-October to the same employees as well as retirees.

“The expansion to new authorized shoppers is expected to increase the contribution to quality-of-life programs and greatly benefit the entire military community,” the release said.

To shop at the exchanges, eligible customers need only present a valid common access card at the door or to the cashier, according to the release. Eligible shoppers without the card may show proof of employment document dated within 12 months and a valid photo ID.

The new privilege does not apply to purchases of alcohol, tobacco or military uniforms and does not apply to DOD contractors, the release said. Base commanders have discretion to revoke the new privilege if the expanded customer base creates too much demand for installations to handle.

The exchange benefit proved too popular when DOD in March 2020 gave base commanders temporary authority to grant shopping privileges to mission-critical DOD civilians and contractors.

Many people misinterpreted the order

to mean every mission-critical DOD employee was automatically granted that privilege, Berry Patrick, who works in the DOD office of morale, welfare and recreation and non-appropriated fund policy, said in an April 14 article by the Military Times.

Patrick said his office fielded many phone calls from people wanting to find out if they had just been granted exchange shopping privileges.

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MILITARY

Paratrooper faces charges from Syria gunfight

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

An 82nd Airborne Division soldier is facing charges stemming from a deadly firefight in Syria between U.S. forces and those backing the regime of President Bashar Assad.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Nicoson, the platoon sergeant on a patrol that came under fire in August near the northeastern Syrian town of Qamishli, faces an Article 32 hearing later this month, similar to a civilian grand jury proceeding, to review evidence against him on several charges related to that and at least one earlier incident.

The charges include two counts of failure to obey an order or regulation, two counts of reckless endangerment, one count of communicating threats and three counts of obstructing justice, division spokesman Lt. Col. Mike Burns said last week after Army Times reported on the case.

The gunbattle broke out on what the U.S.-led coalition described at the time as a routine anti-Islamic State patrol, one of several altercations last year between U.S. military patrols and pro-regime Syrian forces or their Russian backers in the civil war that began in 2011.

The Americans had received "safe passage" from Syrian forces but took fire as they passed, the U.S.-led Operation Inherent Resolve said in a statement at the



ALEC DIONNE/U.S. Army

U.S. and Turkish military forces conduct a joint ground patrol in northeast Syria in 2019. Sgt. 1st Class Robert Nicoson is facing charges stemming from a 2020 incident when U.S.-led coalition and partner forces returned fire after an attack on their convoy near a Syrian military checkpoint.

time. Coalition ground forces returned fire but supporting aircraft overhead didn't strike.

A Syrian fighter was killed and two others were wounded in the incident. There were no coalition casualties.

Nicoson had been under consideration for a Bronze Star with valor device for his actions during the firefight, at least until September, said Phillip Stackhouse, his civilian attorney.

It's unclear what changed, but the charges are based on a "very

thin" inquiry conducted by the Army Criminal Investigation Command, Stackhouse said Friday by phone.

Military officials declined to discuss the charges against Nicoson, who was with the 82nd Airborne Division's Blackhorse Troop, 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment. Stackhouse said the allegations also involve an incident at a checkpoint in June.

He believes the soldier's command conducted two of their own investigations, but has not yet seen

them, and has requested more time to review the evidence and interview witnesses.

The military alleges that Nicoson put the platoon at risk by going somewhere they shouldn't have been and then threatening Syrian forces before the fighting broke out. They do not allege misconduct during the actual gunbattle or say that Nicoson started it, Stackhouse said.

The patrol was supposed to keep its distance from regime forces, but somehow ended up at

the checkpoint, he said. Their movements were being reported to higher authorities and Nicoson was in a vehicle at the rear, Stackhouse said, "and yet they want to hold him accountable for coming within 2 kilometers of a checkpoint."

The platoon commander, who was in a vehicle nearer the front of the column, received a general officer memorandum of reprimand, Stackhouse said, but he is not facing charges like his client.

"How does the platoon sergeant go to a general court-martial when perhaps the appropriate resolution to what occurred that day was an administrative counseling ... if that's what his platoon commander got?" he said.

While Nicoson awaits a hearing, the father of two is unable to use GI Bill benefits, attend military schools or receive other favorable actions such as promotions, his wife said in a public Facebook post last week.

"This has been a devastating event in our lives," Beverly Nicoson, an eight-year veteran herself, wrote on Thursday, though her account appears to have been deleted since.

The obstruction charges allege that Nicoson ordered subordinates to delete their action camera videos, a charge Stackhouse also disputes.

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Improve: Lawmaker seeks public-private child care partnerships

FROM PAGE 1

poor, much like the housing at many of our facilities is very poor. I worry about lead and asbestos and mold," Speier said.

The congresswoman said the department has repaired just eight facilities in the last decade. Speier also said this suggests the issue has not been prioritized, despite the number of inadequate facilities.

While millions of dollars are funneled into weapons programs, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter or a littoral combat ship, "somehow the kids don't count. Well, they count to me and I think they count to the families, so I'm being very aggressive about this. We need to fix it," she said.

Child care is also a focus for Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif., who is working with Speier and other lawmakers on child care amendments in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets funding levels for the Pentagon.

Jacobs represents San Diego, a region with the DOD's largest concentrations of child care needs,

according to the department.

Of the nearly 9,000 children of service members worldwide who are stuck on a waitlist despite immediate need for child care, 1,888 of those children are in San Diego, making up the largest segment on the waitlist. Norfolk, Va., and the National Capital region are close behind at 1,761 and 1,491, respectively, according to the department.

The freshman congresswoman said she aims to fix the existing facilities, while also ensuring there are enough facilities.

"You also need the funding for child care to make sure that those care jobs are good paying jobs, but also that ... they have enough slots that they can go and send their kids to. And so, I'm working on both of those sides of the ledger," said Jacobs, also a member of the personnel subcommittee.

Access to child care is a "readiness concern, because we are having service members who can't deploy because they don't have folks to watch their kids," she said.

Speier said she wants to evaluate all child care centers for lead,

"Now that there are more women in Congress and on the committee, there is a much bigger push to make sure that something gets done on this issue."

Rep. Sara Jacobs
D-Calif.

asbestos and mold, identify "child care deserts" — places where there is no care available — and assess the cost effectiveness of creating more child development centers or accessing services outside the base.

The proposal that is set to be released May 11 would also bring back a provision included in the fiscal year 2006 NDAA that devel-

ops a permanent funding stream for child care center construction. The provision has since expired.

Speier said she is also pushing for public-private partnerships that would make outside service providers supply slots each year for service members in an effort to expand accessibility.

Military advocacy groups, including Blue Star Families in their 2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report, have recommended purchasing child care slots at local civilian providers.

Jennifer Davis, government relations deputy director for the National Military Family Association, said a lack of access to child care was one of the biggest reasons that she left the Air Force. She and her husband received orders to move from Nebraska to Hawaii, and the waitlist at the time to get into a child development center on the installation there was six months.

"So, we would be getting to Hawaii, not knowing anybody, not having any family there, and not having any child care in place. And, I just couldn't do that," said

Davis, who had a newborn baby to care for then.

The coronavirus pandemic has put a further strain on military families, Davis said, as many military spouses have lost their jobs. The unemployment rate for military spouses was 22% in 2019, the last year that the Defense Department surveyed spouses.

Twenty-nine percent of active-duty spouse respondents surveyed in the 2020 Blue Star Families report who had stopped working since the pandemic began in early 2020 said one of the reasons was they did not have child care.

While some NDAA measures in past years have sought to address child care-related accessibility and affordability problems, "the pandemic in general has shown how important child care and care work is," Jacobs said.

"Now that there are more women in Congress and on the committee, there is a much bigger push to make sure that something gets done on this issue," she said.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK



ISHANT CHAUHAN/AP

A man carries a refilled oxygen cylinder as family members of COVID-19 patients wait in queue to refill their oxygen cylinders at Mayapuri area in New Delhi, India, on Monday.

Germany cancels Oktoberfest for 2nd year in a row

By DAVID RISING
Associated Press

BERLIN — Bavarian officials Monday canceled Oktoberfest festivities for a second year in a row due to concerns over the spread of COVID-19, saying there are too many risks in hosting the celebrations — which bring in visitors from around the world — during a global pandemic.

Bavarian Governor Markus Soeder said it was with “heavy hearts” that they decided to call off the festival for which the state is known globally, but that with coronavirus numbers still stubbornly high and German hospitals already struggling, it had to be done.

“Oktoberfest will be held again, and will be big again,” he pledged.

Germany is in the middle of a coronavirus lockdown that includes a ban on large gatherings, with an infection rate of 146.9 new weekly infections per 100,000 residents.

Bavaria is slightly below the national average with 145.4 new weekly infections per 100,000, according to the country’s disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute.

Oktoberfest typically attracts about 6 million visitors from around the world and had been scheduled from Sept. 18 to Oct. 3.

The combination of huge tents full of people and the consumption of large quantities of alcohol, as well as the possibility for mutated varieties of the virus to be brought in from abroad, made it particularly hazardous to go ahead with the festival, Soeder said.

After Oktoberfest was canceled last year, about 50 of the southern German city’s beer halls and other establishments hosted smaller parties under strict coronavirus guidelines. Mayor Dieter Reiter said the hope was that it again would be possible to have open-air beer gardens and patios open under certain restrictions.

Help: US searches for more global aid for India

FROM PAGE 1

ies of victims.

The U.S. has sent India multiple military plane loads of supplies, including oxygen, medicine and raw materials for vaccines, national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on ABC News’ “This Week With George Stephanopoulos.”

The U.S. also is scouring global

sources for more supplies and enlisting international partners in the effort, he said.

“We’re proud of what we’ve done so far,” Sullivan said. “In a crisis of this speed and ferocity, we always wish we could move faster and do more.”

Experts caution that an outbreak as big as India’s raises the threat of more variants and the fear they could be resistant to cur-

rent vaccines.

The U.S is restricting travel from India as of Tuesday, banning most non-U.S. citizens from entering the country.

India, a nation of more than 1.3 billion people caught in a second wave of the pandemic, has had more than 215,000 COVID-19 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center.

Russia lags behind other countries in its COVID-19 vaccination drive

Associated Press

MOSCOW — While at the Park House shopping mall in northern Moscow, Vladimir Makarov saw it was offering the coronavirus vaccine to customers, so he asked how long it would take.

“It turned out it’s simple here — 10 minutes,” he said of his experience last month.

But Makarov, like many Muscovites, still decided to put off getting the Sputnik V shot.

Russia boasted last year of being first in the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine, but it now finds itself lagging in getting its population immunized. That has cast doubt on whether authorities will reach their ambitious goal of vaccinating more than 30 million of the country’s 146 million people by mid-June and nearly 69 million by August.

The vaccine reluctance comes as shots

are readily available in the capital to anyone 18 or older at more than 200 state and private clinics, shopping malls, food courts, hospitals — even a theater.

As of mid-April, over 1 million of Moscow’s 12.7 million residents, or about 8%, have received at least one shot, even though the campaign began in December.

That percentage is similar for Russia as a whole. Through April 27, only 12.1 million

people have gotten at least one shot and only 7.7 million, or 5%, have been fully vaccinated. That puts Russia far behind the U.S., where 43% have gotten at least one shot, and the European Union with nearly 27%.

To boost demand, Moscow officials began offering coupons worth \$13 to those over 60 who get vaccinated — not a small sum for those receiving monthly pensions of about \$260.

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STARS AND STRIPES

VIRUS OUTBREAK

EU could reopen external borders

BY SAMUEL PETREQUIN
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — In an announcement sure to be welcomed by travelers worldwide, EU officials Monday proposed easing restrictions on visiting the 27-nation bloc as vaccination campaigns across the continent gather speed.

Travel to the European Union is currently extremely limited except for a handful of countries with low infection rates. But with the summer tourist season looming, the European Commission hopes the new recommendations will dramatically expand that list.

“The Commission proposes to allow entry to the EU for non-essential reasons not only for all persons coming from countries with a good epidemiological situation, but also all people who have received the last recommended dose of an EU-authorized vaccine,” it said.

Coronavirus vaccines authorized by the European Medicines Agency, the bloc’s drug regulator, include Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson. The EMA has not approved any vaccines from Russia or China as of yet, but is looking at data for Russia’s Sputnik V jab.

EU officials believe the bloc’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign will soon be “a game changer” in the fight against the deadly virus. Its proposal will be discussed with EU ambassadors this week and the Commission hopes it could enter into force by June.

EU nations could also individually decide to accept travelers immunized with vaccines listed by WHO for emergency use. The U.N. health agency has approved the same four vaccines as the EMA, and is expected to make a ruling soon on China’s Sinopharm vaccine.

Commission spokesman Adalbert Jahnz said fully-vaccinated travelers coming from outside the EU should be allowed to visit Europe, but insisted that the proposal’s goal is not to exempt them from testing or quarantines

upon arrival.

“This still remains very much in the hands of the member states,” he said.

The Commission also proposed raising the threshold of new COVID-19 cases that is used to determine the countries from which all travel should be permitted.

“Nonessential travel regardless of individual vaccination status is currently permitted from seven countries with a good epidemiological situation,” it said, proposing to increase 14-day cumulative COVID-19 infection rate per 100,000 inhabitants from 25 to 100.

“This remains considerably below the current EU average, which is over 420,” it said.

It was unclear which countries would actually make the cut, but an EU official who was not authorized to be quoted by name because the proposal has yet to be adopted said Israel would definitely be on the list.

“The UK, question mark, the U.S., for the time being, not quite,” he said. “But we see how quickly the situation in the U.S. is evolving, notably for the rate of vaccination.”

In case the infection situation deteriorates in a non-EU country, the Commission proposed an “emergency brake” to stop dangerous virus variants from entering the bloc through quickly enacted travel limits.

EU officials and nations are also talking about introducing COVID-19 certificates aimed at facilitating travel across the region this summer. The documents, sometimes called coronavirus passports or green certificates, would be given to EU residents who can prove they have been vaccinated or prove they have recovered from COVID-19.

“Until the digital green certificate is operational, member states should be able to accept certificates from non-EU countries,” the Commission said, adding that unvaccinated children should be able to travel with their vaccinated parents if they provide a negative PCR test.



CARLOS GIUSTI/AP

Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Pierluisi, center, attends a mass vaccination campaign against COVID-19 at the Maria Simmons elementary school in Vieques.

Puerto Rico groans under pandemic as health, economy continue to suffer

BY DÁNICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN — Puerto Rico seemed to be sprinting toward herd immunity this spring before people began letting their guard down against COVID-19 and new variants started spreading across the U.S. territory.

Now, a spike in cases and hospitalizations has put medical experts at odds with the government, which is struggling to protect people’s health while also trying to prevent an economic implosion on an island battered by hurricanes, earthquakes and a prolonged financial crisis.

“The difficulty here is how do you find a Solomonic decision ... to give people the opportunity to work and be responsible and also maintain health as a priority,” said Ramón Leal, former president of Puerto Rico’s Restaurant Association. “These are hard conversations.”

It’s a delicate balance for an island that imposed a lockdown and mask mandates ahead of any U.S. state and has some of the strictest entry requirements of any American jurisdiction — measures that helped contain infections before

the latest surge.

Overall, the land of 3.3 million people has reported more than 115,000 confirmed coronavirus cases, over 115,000 suspected ones and more than 2,000 deaths, with transmission rates inching up the last week of April to 28 cases per 100,000 people a day, compared with 17 per 100,000 on the U.S. mainland.

The pandemic has unleashed the second-biggest economic drop Puerto Rico has seen since record-keeping began in 1980, according to José Caraballo, a Puerto Rico economist. The biggest was caused by Hurricane Maria, which inflicted more than \$100 billion in damage in 2017, with nearly 3,000 people dying in its sweltering aftermath.

More than 30,000 jobs have been lost because of the COVID-19 outbreak, and at least 1,400 businesses have closed, Caraballo said — this on an island that saw nearly 12% of its population flee in the past decade and whose government is struggling with crushing debt that led it to file for the biggest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history in 2017.

“I’m taken aback by what the

people of Puerto Rico have had to endure,” Caraballo said.

Many of those who remain are mourning over lost homes, jobs, businesses or loved ones.

Gov. Pedro Pierluisi has resisted tighter restrictions, saying that another lockdown would be too extreme and that things will keep improving and the island could achieve herd immunity by August. “The solution is vaccination.”

More than 2 million doses have been administered on the island, with a robust 55% having received at least one shot and 27% having gotten two.

While health authorities have said they are relieved many are eager to get vaccinated, they note that some people who are not yet fully protected are disregarding restrictions that include a more than yearlong curfew.

That and the presence of at least seven COVID-19 variants on the island are believed to be contributing to the rise in cases. Another factor, experts have said, is a drop in testing from an average of around 7,000 tests a day to 2,000, a trend blamed on people becoming fixated on getting vaccinated.

EU drug regulator evaluating feasibility of Pfizer vaccine for children

Associated Press

AMSTERDAM — The European Union’s drug regulator said Monday that it has begun evaluating a request by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech to extend approval of their coronavirus vaccine to include children ranging in age from 12 to 15.

The European Medicines Agency’s human medicines committee will carry out an accelerated assessment of data submitted by Pfizer and BioNTech and is expected to reach a decision in June, unless it requires extra information, the agency said.

In a statement Friday, the two pharmaceuticals said their request is based on a study in over 2,000 adolescents that showed their vaccine to be safe and effective. The children will continue to be monitored for longer-term protection and safety for another two years.

The companies’ vaccine is currently approved for use in people ages 16 years and older. Extending that approval to the younger age group could offer younger and less at-risk populations in Europe access to the shot for the first time.

Most COVID-19 vaccines ap-

proved by authorities around the world are for adults, who are at higher risk, but health officials believe vaccinating children of all ages will be critical to stopping the pandemic. Some research has shown that older children may play a role in spreading the virus.

NATION



GERRY BROOME/AP

Flowers are displayed ahead of the funeral for Andrew Brown Jr. on Monday at Fountain of Life Church in Elizabeth City, N.C.

Mourners gather for private funeral of Andrew Brown Jr.

Associated Press

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. — Mourners gathered Monday for the funeral of Andrew Brown Jr., a Black man shot and killed by deputies in North Carolina, with eulogists planning to celebrate his legacy and reflect on his life.

The invite-only service at a church in Elizabeth City followed public viewings the previous day. The Rev. Al Sharpton was to deliver the eulogy, and other speakers were to include Brown's relatives as well as civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who's representing Brown's family, and the Rev. Wil-

liam Barber II, leader of the Poor People's campaign.

Brown, 42, was shot and killed on April 21 by deputies attempting to serve drug-related search and arrest warrants, sparking days of protests in the city in rural northeastern North Carolina. An independent autopsy commissioned by his family said that he was shot five times, including once in the back of the head.

Family members have said that Brown was a proud father of seven, who was known for entertaining relatives with his stories and jokes.

Brown's family asked Sharpton to deliver the eulogy because they felt the civil rights leader would properly honor his legacy. Sharpton recently delivered the eulogy for Daunte Wright, who was shot and killed by a police officer in Minnesota.

Sharpton told The Associated Press that he wants to both celebrate Brown's life and help call attention to larger problems with policing that need to be addressed.

"I would want to get across that this is a human being. And for us, it's part of a continual abuse of police power," he said.

US begins reuniting family members at US-Mexico border

BY ELLIOT SPAGAT

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The Biden administration said Monday that four families that were separated at the Mexico border during Donald Trump's presidency will be reunited in the United States this week in what Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas calls "just the beginning" of a broader effort.

Two of the four families include mothers who were separated from their children in late 2017, one Honduran and another Mexican, Mayorkas said, declining to detail their identities. He described them as children who were 3 years old at the time and "teenagers who have had to live without their parent during their most formative years"

Parents will return to the U.S. on humanitarian parole while authorities consider other longer-term forms of legal status, said Michelle Brane, executive director of the administration's Family Reunification Task Force. The children are already in the U.S.

Exactly how many families will reunite in the U.S. and in what order is linked to negotiations with the American Civil Liberties Union to settle a federal lawsuit in San Diego, but Mayorkas said there were more to come.

"We continue to work tirelessly to reunite many more children with their parents in the weeks and months ahead," Mayorkas told reporters ahead of the announcement. "We have a lot of work still to do, but I am proud of the progress we have made and the reunifications that we have helped to achieve this week."

More than 5,000 children were separated from their parents during the Trump administration going back to July 1, 2017, many of them under a "zero-tolerance" policy to criminally prosecute any adult who entered the country illegally, ac-

ording to court filings. The Biden administration is doing its own count going back to Trump's inauguration in January 2017 and, according to Brane, believes more than 1,000 families remain separated.

While family separation under "zero-tolerance" ended in June 2018 under court order and shortly after Trump reversed course, Biden has repeatedly assailed the practice as an act of cruelty. An executive order on his first day in office pledged to reunite families that were still separated "to the greatest extent possible."

The reunifications begin as the Biden administration confronts the third major increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the border in seven years. It has made strides moving children from grossly overcrowded Border Patrol facilities to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shelters, which are more suited to longer-term stays until children are placed with sponsors in the U.S., typically parents or close relatives.

The average stay for an unaccompanied child in Border Patrol custody has plummeted to about 20 hours, below the legal limit of 72 hours and down from 133 hours in late March, Mayorkas said. There are 677 unaccompanied children in Border Patrol custody, down from more than 5,700 in late March.

Health and Human Services opened 14 emergency intake centers, raising capacity to nearly 20,000 beds from 952 when the Federal Emergency Management Agency was dispatched March 13, Mayorkas said. About 400 asylum officers from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have been assigned as case managers to speed the release of children to sponsors. As of Thursday, Health and Human Services had 22,557 children in its care.

Hundreds join Daunte Wright's family on march for police reform

Associated Press

BROOKLYN CENTER, Minn. — Hundreds of people joined Daunte Wright's family and friends on a march through the Minneapolis suburb where he was fatally shot by a police officer during a traffic stop three weeks earlier.

Demonstrators on Sunday called for police reform and more serious charges against the officer who killed Wright, a 20-year-old Black man, on April 11.

The crowd gathered in the neighborhood where Kimberly Potter, who is white, fatally shot Wright as he struggled with police. Potter's body camera recorded her shouting "Taser! Taser!" before she fired, and the city's former police chief said he believed she meant to use her stun gun.

The group walked several miles to the Brooklyn Center Police Department where his mother, Katie Wright, called on the crowd to keep saying her son's name.

"We're going to continue to be in these streets, on social media, at the police station ... Like I've always said, it's never gonna be justice for us," she said. "But we want 100% accountability."

Potter was charged with second-degree manslaughter in Wright's killing, which Katie Wright said was not enough. He was killed as the Minneapolis area already was on heightened alert during the trial of Derek Chauvin in George Floyd's death. Chauvin was con-

victed April 20.

Johnathon McClellan, president of the Minnesota Justice Coalition, told protesters that his group is demanding that additional charges be brought against Potter. He also said the coalition plans to pressure elected officials to support police reform, the Star Tribune reported.

Demonstrators shut down traffic a couple of times before arriving at the police station, which is secured by concrete barriers and fencing.

Wright's name was spelled out in air fresheners attached to the fencing. Wright's mother said he told her on the phone that he was pulled over for an air freshener hanging from the rearview mirror.

Police have said they pulled Wright over for an expired registration, and then discovered that he had a warrant for a gross misdemeanor weapons charge. Potter fatally shot Wright seconds after he pulled away from officers as they tried to arrest him.

NATION

Overcrowded boat capsizes off San Diego

Dozens hurt in suspected smuggling vessel that broke apart in rough surf

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A packed boat being used in a suspected human smuggling operation capsized Sunday and broke apart in powerful surf along the rocky San Diego coast, killing three people and injuring more than two dozen others, authorities said.

Lifeguards, the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies responded around 10:30 a.m. following reports of an overturned vessel in the waves near the rugged peninsula of Point Loma, according to the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

The original call was for a handful of people overboard, but as rescuers arrived in boats and jet skis, they quickly realized “it was going to be a bigger situation with more people,” said San Diego Lifeguard Services Lt. Rick Romero.

“There are people in the water, drowning, getting sucked out the rip current there,” he said.

Seven people were pulled from the waves, including three who drowned, said Romero. One person was rescued from a cliff and 22 others managed to make it to shore on their own, he said.

“Once we arrived on scene, the boat had basically been broken apart,” Romero said. “Conditions were pretty rough: 5 to 6 feet of surf, windy, cold.”

A total of 27 people were transported to hospitals with “a wide variety of injuries” including hypothermia, Romero said. Most of

the victims were able to walk themselves to ambulances, he said.

Officials said the group was overcrowded on a 40-foot cabin cruiser that is larger than the typical open-top wooden panga-style boats often used by smugglers to bring people illegally into the United States from Mexico.

“Every indication from our perspective was this was a smuggling vessel. We haven’t confirmed their nationality,” said Jeff Stephenson, a supervising agent with U.S. Border Patrol.

Under a pandemic-related order in effect since March 2020, migrants from Mexico and people from Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras picked up at the border are immediately expelled to Mexico without an opportunity to seek asylum. President Joe Biden has exempted unaccompanied children from expulsions but the vast majority of adults are quickly sent back without facing any consequences.

Border Patrol agents went to hospitals to interview survivors of the capsizing, including the boat’s captain, who Stephenson described as a “suspected smuggler.” Smugglers typically face federal charges, and those being smuggled are usually deported.

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department spokesman Jose Ysea said when he arrived on scene near the Cabrillo National Monument,



DENIS POROY/AP

Wreckage and debris from a capsized boat washes ashore at Cabrillo National Monument near where a boat capsized just off the San Diego coast Sunday.

there was a “large debris field” of splintered wood and other items in the choppy waters.

“In that area of Point Loma, it’s very rocky. It’s likely the waves just kept pounding the boat, breaking it apart,” he said.

There were life preservers on board, but it wasn’t known how many or whether any passengers were wearing them, officials said.

Among the rescuers was an unnamed Navy sailor who was in the area with his family and jumped in the water to assist someone in an effort described by Romero as a “huge help.”

Officials believed everyone on board was accounted for right

away, but crews in boats and aircraft continued to search the area for several hours for other possible survivors, Ysea said.

On Thursday, border officials intercepted a panga-type vessel traveling without navigation lights 11 miles off the coast of Point Loma with 21 people on board. The crew took all 15 men and six women into custody. Agents determined all were Mexican citizens with no legal status to enter the U.S., according to a statement released by Customs and Border Protection. Two of the people on the boat, the suspected smugglers, will face charges, it said.

Border Patrol said Friday that

law enforcement officials would be ramping up operations to disrupt maritime smuggling off the coast of San Diego this weekend.

As warmer weather comes to San Diego, there is a misconception that it will make illegal crossings safer or easier, the agency said in a statement.

In early March, an SUV packed with migrants collided with a tractor-trailer in the farming community of Holtville, Calif., about 125 miles east of San Diego. The crash killed 13 of 25 people inside the 1997 Ford Expedition, including the driver, in one of the deadliest border-related crashes in U.S. history.

Wyoming backs coal with \$1.2M threat to sue other states

Associated Press

CHEYENNE — While most states pursue ways to boost renewable energy, Wyoming is doing the opposite with a new program aimed at propping up the dwindling coal industry by suing other states that block exports of Wyoming coal and cause Wyoming coal-fired power plants to shut down.

The law signed April 6 by Republican Gov. Mark Gordon creates a \$1.2 million fund for an initiative that marks the latest at-

tempt by state leaders to help coal in the state that accounts for the bulk of U.S. coal production, which is down by half since 2008.

“Wyoming is sending a message that it is prepared to bring litigation to protect her interests,” Gordon spokesman Michael Pearlman said of the fund signed into law April 6.

The law puts West Coast states and Colorado on notice — all seek to get a large share of their electricity from renewables but still get juice from aging Wyoming

coal-fired power plants. The approach may run into legal troubles, though, according to one constitutional expert.

Lawsuits between states aren’t unusual and often involve natural resources, such as water rights. Such cases can go directly to the U.S. Supreme Court, if the justices agree to hear them.

Last year, Wyoming and Montana — another major coal state — asked the Supreme Court to override a decision by Washington state to deny a permit to build a

coal export dock on the Columbia River. The interstate lawsuit followed years of unsuccessful attempts by the dock’s developer, Utah-based Lighthouse Resources, to contest the permit denial in federal court.

The Supreme Court hasn’t said yet if it will hear the case, but the new legal fund approved resoundingly by the Wyoming Legislature and overseen by Gordon could help cover the cost of that litigation, Pearlman said.

All the while, prospects for

Wyoming’s coal industry are as dim as ever, even after then-President Donald Trump rolled back regulations on mining and burning the fossil fuel.

Wyoming coal production, which accounts for about 40% of the nation’s total, has been in decline as utilities switch to gas, which is cheaper to burn to generate electricity. Solar and wind power are also on the rise as coal’s share of the U.S. power market shrinks from about half in the early 2000s to less than 20% now.

Multiple tornadoes tear through Mississippi; Tupelo hit at night

Associated Press

Multiple tornadoes were reported across Mississippi on Sunday, causing some damage with no immediate word of injuries.

A line of severe storms rolled through the state Sunday afternoon and into the nighttime hours. Late Sunday, a “tornado emergen-

cy” was declared for Tupelo and surrounding areas. Meteorologists urged residents to take cover.

“Damage has been reported in the City of Tupelo,” the mayor’s office said in a Facebook post just before 11 p.m. “Emergency crews are currently assessing the degree of damage. Please do not get out and

drive.”

Photos retweeted by the National Weather Service in Memphis showed several downed trees and power lines. Tupelo Middle School sustained some damage, as well as houses and businesses.

Calhoun County Sheriff Greg Pollan said Calhoun City also “was

hit hard tonight.”

“Light poles have been snapped off. Trees in a few homes. Trees on vehicles. Damage to several businesses. Fortunately, we have had no reports at this time of injuries,” Pollan posted on Facebook, asking people to stay off the roads. “Emergency personnel are working fe-

verishly to open the roads as quickly as possible.”

News outlets also reported tornadoes near Yazoo City, Byram and Tchula earlier in the day. The National Weather Service in Jackson shared several images of funnel clouds across different parts of the state.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man facing hate crimes for synagogue vandalism

NY NEW YORK — A 29-year-old man faces hate crime charges for allegedly vandalizing several synagogues last week in the Bronx, New York City police said.

Jordan Burnette was arrested after being stopped by police for riding a bicycle against the flow of traffic, Deputy Inspector Jessica Corey, commanding officer of the Hate Crimes Task Force, said at a news conference.

Surveillance video from the area allegedly showed Burnette had thrown a rock through the windshield of a van and was in a synagogue parking lot where religious prayer books were found strewn on the ground.

Police said Burnette was riding a bicycle taken from a shed in the parking lot at the time he was stopped. He is suspected of shattering the windows of four synagogues last week.

Police: 4 arrested after drug deal on boardwalk

MD OCEAN CITY — Four Maryland men were arrested after police said they observed a drug deal on the Ocean City Boardwalk.

Ocean City Police said that they received a call from a boardwalk business owner who said he saw the occupants of a parked car on 8th Street measuring a white powder on a digital scale.

Undercover officers responded and police said they observed a drug transaction on the boardwalk. Police said the men engaged in the transaction got into two cars and drove off before being stopped.

Four men from Prince George's County were arrested on multiple charges. Police said they seized black tar heroin, powder cocaine, a digital scale, cash and a 9 mm handgun.

Woman surrenders dead dog, charged with neglect

IA ANKENY — An Iowa woman has been charged with animal neglect after bringing a dead dog and a starving puppy to an animal shelter.

Amber Jane Robinson, 39, of Ankeny was charged after she brought both dogs to the Animal Rescue League of Iowa on April 24, according to the Des Moines Register.

The complaint against Robinson said the dead black Labrador was extremely skinny and covered in its own waste when it was brought to the shelter. A 9-month-old German Shepherd puppy she also brought in was extremely dehydrated, and its ribs and spine protruded prominently from its body.

The complaint said a veterinarian technician estimated that the dead dog would have had to have been left unattended for three to



CHANCEY BUSH, THE (DENVER, COLO.) GAZETTE/AP

Swinging into thrills

People ride the Sea Dragon during opening day at Elitch Gardens in Denver. The amusement park opened over the weekend for the first time since Nov. 3, 2019. The park has new safety guidelines due to the pandemic and is allowed to operate at 43% of their normal capacity without the water park.

four weeks to reach the state it was in, and officials said it died of starvation. The puppy needed immediate medical attention.

'Zombie Terminator' ammo seized at Wilmington port

DE WILMINGTON — Federal agents seized 40 rounds of "Zombie Terminator" ammunition from a Delaware port, preventing its shipment to Honduras.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said that the rounds were discovered during an X-ray examination of household goods in a shipping container at the Port of Wilmington.

It is illegal to export ammunition without a federal license.

Customs and Border Protection said the box of .38-caliber ammunition was tagged as "the best self-defense ammo during a zombie apocalypse."

Helicopter to drop rabies vaccines over Cape Cod

MA BOURNE — A helicopter is dropping oral rabies vaccine baits intended

THE CENSUS

18 The minimum age to marry that would be set in South Carolina by a new bill that took its first step in the state Senate.

The state set the minimum age at 16 two years ago, but Sen. Brad Hutto said it's time to take the next step and move the age to 18. A Senate subcommittee agreed, sending the bill to the full Senate Judiciary Committee, the Post and Courier of Charleston reported. With just six days left in the session, the bill is unlikely to get through the Senate. But it will remain in place when the 2022 session starts.

for raccoons and other wildlife over portions of Barnstable and Plymouth counties, the Cape Cod Times reported.

The distribution of the vaccine baits to the north and west of the Cape Cod Canal will continue through June 4, the Cape Cod and Southeast Massachusetts Rabies Task Force said in a statement. About 68,000 oral rabies vaccine baits will be distributed.

Using a helicopter allows the state's wildlife services to get baits into areas not accessible by vehicle. The program is designed to boost wildlife rabies vaccination rates and prevent the reemergence of raccoon rabies.

The vaccine is contained in baits that have a strong fish smell, unpleasant to people but attractive to raccoons, which are then vaccinated against rabies after

consuming the baits, the statement said.

Almost \$11,000 of stolen store merchandise found

MS COVINGTON COUNTY — Law enforcement in a Mississippi county said they found around \$11,000 worth of stolen Dollar General merchandise hidden in a shed and truck at someone's home.

Covington County Sheriff Darrell Perkins told WLBT-TV his deputies were working with an investigator who was hired by Dollar General after a string of recent thefts.

Perkins said that Dollar General officials believed a delivery driver was taking merchandise out of trucks and keeping it, according to WLBT.

Their investigation led them to a home in the northeast part of the county. A storage shed and truck contained nearly \$11,000 of stolen goods.

Courthouse needs major repairs after flooding

GA ALBANY — A courthouse in southwest Georgia needs extensive repairs after a water leak caused flooding throughout the building.

Officials determined that a leaky water line connected to a third-floor coffee machine went undetected for two days before unleashing a soggy mess inside the Albany Dougherty Judicial Building, WALB-TV reported.

Heidi Minnick, facilities management director for Dougherty County, said water gushed down a stairway like a waterfall.

The building is dry now, but remains closed. Minnick said roughly one-third of the building will need some type of repairs.

County officials are waiting on insurance adjusters to give a cost estimate.

WORLD

US officials in Mideast reassure allies over Iran

By ISABEL DEBRE
Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Top Biden administration officials and U.S. senators crisscrossed the Middle East on Monday, seeking to assuage growing unease among Gulf Arab partners over America's re-engagement with Iran and other policy shifts in the region.

The trips come as the United States and Iran, through intermediaries in Vienna, discuss a return to Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that former President Donald Trump abandoned three

years ago. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies, excluded from Obama-era nuclear negotiations, have repeatedly pressed for a seat at the table, insisting that any return to the accord must address Iran's ballistic missile program and support for regional proxies.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a key Biden ally dispatched on overseas diplomatic missions, told reporters in the UAE's capital of Abu Dhabi that he hoped to allay the sheikhdom's "understandable and legitimate concerns" about the return to the landmark deal and to create "broader engagement"

with Gulf partners.

Coons said "close consultation" with the UAE about the ongoing talks in Vienna was "important, expected and happening," adding that he hopes the Emiratis "may not just be notified, but actually help."

What that means remains unclear, as Gulf states now watch with resignation as negotiations gain traction in the Austrian capital. When asked to elaborate, Coons balked at the suggestion that the UAE's input had acquired any greater significance in talks with Iran over the last five years.

"I did not in any way mean to suggest that

there was some deal in the works where the Emiratis would be securing anything," he said. "Vienna is the place where the United States government, the administration, is negotiating."

In a tour intended to boost "long-standing political, economic, cultural and security ties," several senior Biden administration officials are touring Arab capitals, with Brett McGurk from the National Security Council and Derek Chollet from the State Department, among others, stopping in Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Amman and Cairo this week.

US, UK to meet ahead of G-7 talks

Associated Press

LONDON — Issues related to Iran are set to feature in talks later Monday between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his host in London, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

The bilateral talks come a day ahead of the first face-to-face discussions in two years of foreign and development ministers from the Group of Seven leading industrial nations and other invited representatives. The U.K. holds this

year's presidency of the G-7.

Blinken's visit to London comes amid mounting speculation of a prisoner exchange deal with Iran. Prisoner exchanges are not uncommon and were a feature of the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and leading powers. Biden has indicated that he is looking to restart nuclear talks with Tehran after his predecessor, Donald Trump, pulled the U.S. out of the agreement.

Earlier Monday, Blinken held

bilateral talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi on an array of subjects including the coronavirus pandemic and the climate crisis, as well as raising concerns over North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

On Tuesday, the full G-7 — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. — will meet along with representatives from other countries, including Australia, India and South Africa.



BEN STANSALL / AP

Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, right, welcomes U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken ahead of G7 talks in London on Monday.



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WORLD

EU summons Russia envoy over blacklisting of its officials

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union has summoned Russia's ambassador after Moscow blacklisted eight EU officials in retaliation for the bloc's decision to impose sanctions over the imprisonment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The Russian list announced Friday includes European Parliament

President David Sassoli and Vera Jourova, a vice president of the European Commission whose brief includes rule of law issues and disinformation.

European Commission spokesman Peter Stano said that Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov would meet in Brussels later Monday with senior EU officials who "will convey to him our strong condemnation and rejection of this decision."

tion of this decision."

Stano said the Russian-imposed travel bans are "obviously very politically motivated and lack any legal justification. They are groundless." He said that "this all shows that Russia is determined to continue the hostile track of confrontation."

Russia's foreign ministry has accused the EU of wanting to punish Moscow for its "independent foreign and domestic policies" and of trying to limit its development with "unlawful restrictions."

EU foreign ministers will discuss tensions with Russia when they meet on May 10. The 27-nation bloc's heads of state and government will also take up the issue at their summit on May 25.

The EU in March imposed sanctions on six Russian officials involved in the imprisonment of Navalny, who is Russian President Vladimir Putin's most vociferous opponent. Navalny was arrested in January upon his return from Germany where he spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin — accusations Russian officials reject. European labs have confirmed that Navalny was poisoned.

Extreme thunderstorm fatal in eastern China

Associated Press

BEIJING — An extreme thunderstorm hit an eastern Chinese city, leaving 11 dead and 66 injured, with strong winds causing buildings and trees to collapse, officials said.

Nantong city, located in the eastern province of Jiangsu, was among the hardest-hit when the extreme weather swept the Yangtze Delta on Friday night, according to state-affiliated newspaper Global Times.

Rescuers evacuated 3,050 people, a local government notice said.

Wind speeds of 100 mph overturned a fishing ship. Two sailors were rescued and search operations were underway for the nine remaining crew members, the notice said.

Electricity has been restored in Nantong, and collapsed trees, damaged vehicles as well as windows that have been blown away were being cleared.

French prosecutors seek end of Rwanda probe

Associated Press

PARIS — Paris prosecutors on Monday requested the end of a yearslong investigation of accusations of involvement of France's peacekeeping force in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which an estimated 800,000 people were slaughtered.

French investigative magistrates are now in charge of making the definitive decision.

Prosecutors concluded that the investigation didn't establish evidence that French forces were involved in crimes of complicity of genocide and complicity of crimes against humanity. The

probe didn't show any potential support from French forces during the massacres, consent or evidence that the military refrained from intervening when facing such crimes, the statement detailed.

The investigation had been opened in 2005 after six complaints had been filed by Rwandan nationals accusing the French-led military intervention backed by the U.N., named Operation Turquoise, of involvement in the genocide.

The prosecutors' announcement comes after French President Emmanuel Macron's recent

steps to improve relations with Rwanda, following decades of tensions over Paris' attitude before and during the genocide.

A March report commissioned by Macron in May concluded that French authorities had been "blind" to the preparations for genocide and then reacted too slowly to appreciate the extent of the killings and to respond to them.

Another report from the Rwandan government said last month that the French government bears "significant" responsibility for "enabling a foreseeable genocide."

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Republicans harvesting gains in prairie states

By ART CULLEN

Special to The Washington Post

One-two-three they step in time, the governors of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota. They move as one on immigration, abortion and wearing masks in public. Within hours of one saying something, you hear two echoes.

The three states that meet where the Missouri River merges with the waters of the Big Sioux have completed a political revolution in the last generation. Republicans rule here now almost without opposition. All three governors enjoy huge GOP majorities in their legislatures and rarely need to think about accountability — or Democrats. They dwell instead on sustaining a politics that was unimaginable just 25 years ago.

Last year, Kim Reynolds, the Republican governor of my Iowa, got a tip from actor and fellow Hawkeye Ashton Kutcher that one of his buddies had organized a COVID testing enterprise in Utah. Reynolds soon issued a \$26 million no-bid contract.

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts, also a Republican, followed suit, issuing a contract of similar size to the same outfit. Tests were delayed or lost. The firm declared itself blameless, and that was that. Nothing more was heard from either side of the Missouri.

Reynolds and Ricketts are simpatico with Gov. Kristi Noem of South Dakota. Their three-way tour de force came during a surge of COVID infections racing through Midwest-

ern slaughterhouses in April 2020. The trio coordinated with the North American Meat Institute (representing the giant meatpackers, which were hobbled by a sickened workforce), and then with Trump Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, to order meat cutters back to work through the Defense Authorization Act. The governors threatened to deny unemployment benefits to workers who felt vulnerable. They pledged to shield the firms from liability for workers' compensation or litigation. They suppressed or prevented testing — or gave the companies the green light to do it themselves. Anything to keep the cheap pork loins rolling.

The three governors are of melded mind, opposing any limits on agriculture and resisting President Joe Biden's climate plan. They all moved in some way to ban "vaccine passports." They retweet each other's tweets. It has grown familiar.

All three jumped on Biden a few weeks ago when his administration asked states for help in situating refugee children temporarily with families until their cases could be processed. Reynolds took to conservative talkradio to declare that it was not her problem, it was the president's. Ricketts seconded that motion. Not to be outdone, Noem tweeted, "My message to illegal immigrants ... call me when you're an American."

It makes me wonder: Is someone calling this tune? If I trundled down the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City, who would I find be-

hind the curtain? Because it is sort of uncanny.

I called around to check with folks in the know, but the consensus view is that we may be past the age where any one person calls this dance. Instead, they say, we are living in a giant feedback loop, where a crazy idea can find its way into the political bloodstream in a matter of days; within a few weeks, it can easily become law.

The thinkers and writers at some think tank test a message on talk radio; the host tweets that out to generate audience and attention; soon, the quip or idea shows up as a GIF on Facebook. Next, some political consultant hosts a focus group; Fox News and its imitators pick up on it, and soon, an outside adviser suggests that a governor should tell child refugees, "Hasta la vista." The advisers talk, someone texts the chiefs of staff, and it soon comes out in the wash.

Maybe so. What I am sure of is this: Republicans grabbed ahold of most statehouses a decade ago and are busy harvesting their gains. The once-a-decade redistricting this year will empower them further. The three governors know where the GOP base is — right where Donald Trump left it. Their lock-step actions are a measure of the grip the former president still holds out here where the wind blows east from the Rockies' backside.

Art Cullen is editor of the Storm Lake Times in northwest Iowa. He is author of the book, "Storm Lake: Change, Resilience, and Hope in America's Heartland."

44 down, 1,156 confirmations to go in 'broken system'

By FRED HIATT

The Washington Post

The Biden administration is winning praise because it managed to get 44 appointees through Senate confirmation and into their offices by its 100th day.

Yes, a job well done. Now, only 1,156 to go! If you detect a note of sarcasm, it is not directed toward the Biden folks. They have indeed managed to scale up quickly, especially given the obstacles they faced: a pandemic, an impeachment trial and an unprecedented absence of cooperation from the outgoing administration.

That administration, at this stage, had secured only 28 confirmations, and President George W. Bush had managed only 34. President Barack Obama had done better by his 100th day with 67 confirmations, but President Joe Biden has submitted more nominees for Senate consideration (220) than Obama (190), Bush (85) or Donald Trump (72).

Moreover, Biden has installed an impressive 1,500 appointees in positions that don't require confirmation.

But step back and ask: Why in the world do we require 1,200 government officials to go through the time-consuming, often unilluminating and even counterproductive Senate confirmation process? And why do we designate 4,000 jobs as patronage appointments, a number unmatched in any other democracy, to turn over every time there is a new president?

One unavoidable answer: Because we are willing to live with the government dysfunction that both give rise to.

"We have to prove democracy still works," Biden said in his first address to Congress last week.

I think the president is right to identify that

as his, and the nation's, most urgent priority, and it has many layers. Following a president who was so contemptuous of democratic norms; facing an opposition party that continues to falsely challenge the legitimacy of American elections; speaking through social media that frequently distorts and deceives — Biden has his work cut out for him as he aims to restore faith in democracy.

But an obvious place to start is to prove, as Biden went on to say, "that our government still works." And one way to improve government would be to end the quadrennial turnover of personnel that is both too massive and too slow.

"It's just a broken system," says Max Stier. Stier is president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit that advocates for policies that will improve the quality of the federal workforce and appropriately reward that workforce when it does good work. (The partnership also collaborates with The Washington Post to keep track of administration appointments and is the source of the numbers at the top of this column.)

The dysfunction manifests in multiple ways. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was confirmed at the start of the administration, but he's had to gear up without a leadership team. By the time the latecomers arrive, early appointees will have formed relationships and practices, making it hard for everyone to mesh. By the time Biden's full team is in place, the midterm election will be looming.

Moreover, Stier notes, the average tenure of confirmed appointees ends up being only about two years — and that was before the Trump administration, with its frequent turnover, undoubtedly brought down the average. The natural inclination for a confirmed appointee, arriving late and feeling

pressed for time, is to burn through talent, not build a workforce for the long haul.

Meanwhile, the vast number of patronage slots tends to devalue expertise and experience. Many presidential appointees are superbly qualified — more this year than four years ago — but inevitably some are being rewarded more for loyalty than suitability for the job.

The rational system would be to have a far smaller number of political appointees, who would ensure the president's policies are carried out as they direct a corps of civil servants with institutional memory and the qualifications to take on the increasingly complex problems government must grapple with. Among those political appointees, an even smaller number of leaders would be confirmable and accountable to the Senate.

Not surprisingly, there's a lot of institutional resistance to change. The more appointments the Senate can hold up, the more leverage it has over administration policy.

A recent case in point: Every Republican on the Senate Finance Committee on April 22 voted against Biden's appointee to run the agency that oversees Medicare and Medicaid, not because they think Chiquita Brooks-LaSure is unqualified, but in protest of an administration decision affecting Medicaid delivery in Texas. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, has vowed to delay a vote on her nomination by the full Senate for the same reason. Meanwhile, one of the government's most important agencies will remain rudderless.

So, congratulations to the Biden team for hitting 44 on Day 100. Let's hope they can get to 1,200 before the year is out — and, even more, let's hope they promote reform so the next president faces fewer confirmation battles.

Fred Hiatt is the editorial page editor of The Washington Post.

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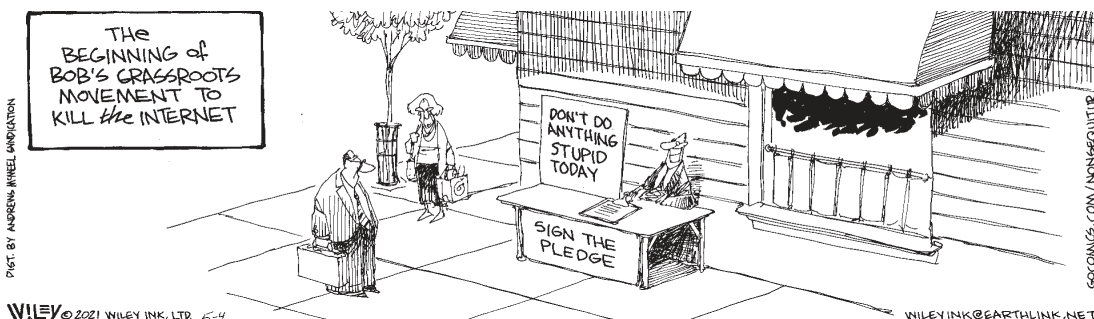
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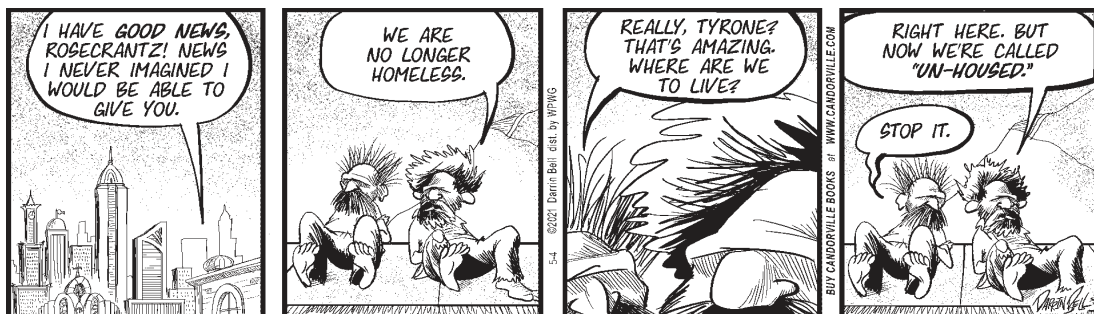
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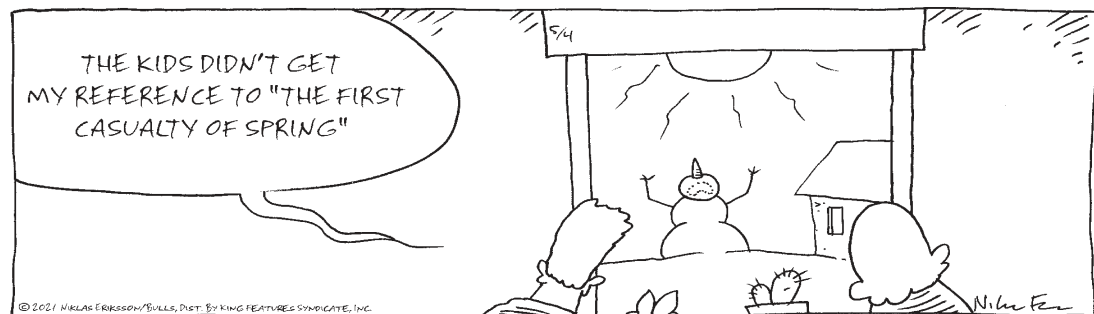
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

- 1 "Prometheus" actor Idris
- 5 Some coll. degrees
- 8 Jug handles
- 12 Property claim
- 13 Inventor Whitney
- 14 Opening day?
- 15 Unconventionally stylish, to the max
- 17 Sweet wine
- 18 PC key
- 19 Fern seeds
- 21 Daily Planet reporter Kent
- 24 Helps
- 25 Moth variety
- 26 Lively parties
- 30 "Evil Woman" band
- 31 Los —, California
- 32 Diner dessert
- 33 Purpose
- 35 Body powder
- 36 Decomposes
- 37 Reacts to yeast
- 38 Diocese part
- 41 Lay down the lawn
- 42 Nobel Prize subj.
- 43 Specialized drag racer
- 48 Sleep like —
- 49 Dos Passos trilogy

DOWN

- 50 — Major
- 51 Sci-fi's Skywalker
- 52 Triathlon segment
- 53 Bard
- 1 Santa's helper
- 2 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
- 3 Oscar winner Kingsley
- 4 Turkey's capital
- 5 Borscht veggie
- 6 Gore and Green
- 7 Audits, as a class
- 8 Make public
- 9 Cupid's specialty
- 10 Scarce
- 11 Bygone fliers
- 16 Sort
- 20 Sharable PC files
- 21 Staff leader?
- 22 Humdinger
- 23 Unsigned (Abbr.)
- 24 Ones for the road?
- 26 Loyal
- 27 Relaxing resorts
- 28 Scrabble piece
- 29 Brief moments
- 31 Classic Pontiacs
- 34 Cower
- 35 Neaten
- 37 Harry Potter pal
- 38 Bell sound
- 39 Rights org.
- 40 Castle
- 41 Hose woe
- 44 Exploit
- 45 — -Magnon
- 46 Enzyme suffix
- 47 Squealer

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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 B O P T L A V G X Y U M , Z V T ' X
 I D O P V X - W D B U M D X .
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MOTTO OF CHEFS WHO ALWAYS PREFER TO USE LIBERAL AMOUNTS OF HERBS AND SPICES: "SEASON THE DAY!"
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals Y



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FACES

Grammys overhaul nominee selection process

BY MESFIN FEKADU
Associated Press

The Grammy Awards have changed their tune and voted to remove the anonymous nomination review committees — groups that determined the contenders for key awards at the coveted music show.

The Recording Academy made the announcement April 30 after the board of trustees met and approved the change.

“It’s been a year of unprecedented, transformational change for the Recording Academy, and I’m immensely proud to be able to continue our journey of growth with these latest updates to our awards process,” Harvey Mason Jr., the academy’s interim presi-

dent and CEO, said in a statement April 30.

“This is a new Academy, one that is driven to action and that has doubled down on the commitment to meeting the needs of the music community. While change and progress are key drivers of our actions, one thing will always remain — the Grammy Award is the only peer-driven and peer-voted recognition in music,” he continued. “We are honored to work alongside the music community year-round to further refine and protect the integrity of the awards process.”

The major change comes months after The Weeknd blasted the Grammys and called them “corrupt” after he earned zero

nominations for the 2021 show despite having the year’s biggest single with “Blinding Lights.” Nominees will now be based purely on votes made by the academy’s 11,000+ voting members, and the academy said that “more than 90 percent of its members will have gone through the requalification process by the end of this year, ensuring that the voting body is actively engaged in music creation.”

For the Grammys’ top four awards — album, song and record of the year, along with best new artist — a nomination review committee of at least 20 music generalists in past years selected the top eight nominees from those voted into the top 20.

The majority of the 80-plus

Grammy categories were voted by nomination review committees, which were intended to safeguard a specific genre’s integrity and to serve as additional checks and balances. While nominees for some categories like best pop vocal album and best pop solo performance were based purely on votes, a number of genre categories had nomination review committees. Those included the rap, rock, R&B, country, dance/electronic music, American Roots, Latin, jazz and gospel/Christian music fields. Nomination review committees for those groups consisted of 13 to 17 voting members who selected five nominees from the top 15.

But questions have loomed for

years around the nominations process with music industry players calling for more transparency because the selection of finalists happens behind closed doors. Others have claimed that members of key nominating committees promote projects they worked on or projects they favor based on personal relationships.

Other changes announced last week include limiting how many genre categories voters can vote in, which has been reduced from 15 to 10. All voters can vote for the top four awards.

The academy also introduced two new awards, bringing its total to 86: best global music performance and best música urbana album.

‘Quest’ for normal life

Rob McElhenney’s show on Apple TV+ dreams of post-pandemic days

BY ELLEN GRAY
The Philadelphia Inquirer

There’s more to Rob McElhenney these days than Mac.

The actor who created and stars as Mac in FX’s “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” is also Ian Grimm, the comically insufferable alpha dog of the Apple TV+ streaming series “Mythic Quest,” which McElhenney created with Charlie Day and Megan Ganz.

A workplace comedy set in a video game studio, it enters its second season Friday, with a two-episode premiere that finds Ian and his co-creative director, Poppy Li (Charlotte Nicdao) trying, not very successfully, to be creative together.

“It’s Always Sunny,” meanwhile, is expected to return later this year for its 15th season, when it will pass “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet” to become TV’s longest-running live-action comedy.

We spoke with McElhenney in mid-April about the new season of “Mythic Quest.” This interview has been edited and condensed.

The Philadelphia Inquirer: You had done a special pandemic-themed episode of “Mythic Quest” last year, “Quarantine,” and on April 16 you released a second special, “Everlight,” that welcomed everyone back to the office. Is the new season meant to take place after the pandemic?

McElhenney: Yeah, the idea is that it’s projecting into a future where we’ve returned to a sense of, quote, unquote, normalcy. We recognize that [in reality] that might not be for a little while. But we also felt, as we were writing the second season from our homes, in isolation, and realizing how tired of the experience we had become, that the audience was going to be in that position as well.



Charlotte Nicdao and Rob McElhenney star in “Mythic Quest.” Season 2 premieres May 7.

Yet we recognized that [we couldn’t] just make an episode where we were back in this sort of fantasy future without at least paying respect to the fact that this transition would be difficult. So we wanted to make a special episode that sort of addressed it head-on. And look towards a much more positive and optimistic future.

How do you see the arc of this season of “Mythic Quest”?

I see a story of characters evolving, and changing and progressing, which is such a different way of telling a story than the other show [“It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia”], where the characters never grow or change or progress in any way.

I think that a show like “Mythic Quest” allows us the opportunity to tell those kinds of stories. So I’m really excited about the fact that [for] all of the characters, not just Poppy and I, but Poppy and I most specifically, there’s real change. You’re watching people learn how to navigate life a little bit better than they did in season one.

Did landing Danny DeVito as a regular on “It’s Always Sunny” all those years ago make you more ambitious in terms of casting? F. Murray Abraham is a “Mythic Quest” regular and you have another Oscar winner, William Hurt, guest-starring in an episode this season. And let’s not forget Snoop Dogg.

Definitely. Our original conception of “Sunny” was this very small, sort of insular thing, and [that] it’s grown exponentially ... Certainly, Danny’s inclusion was the catalyst for that. We just thought, well, Danny’s in a different stratosphere; he would never consider coming on to the show. And within a few hours of talking to him, when he signed on, it sort of validated what we were doing. And we’ve had a similar experience here, with Murray.

You’re on the May cover of Men’s Health — when did you become THAT guy?

I became that guy for, like, a good solid week, during “Sunny” a few years ago [in season 13]. That guy went away for a while, because that guy is so boring. And then a few years went by and they were like, do you want to do the cover of Men’s Health? So then that guy came back for like another, like, two-day period. And then that guy got put on a shelf again, because that guy is so unbelievably dull, because all he does is work out and eat the most boring food you could possibly imagine.

You’re writing, producing, and starring in two comedies, on different platforms, during a pandemic. What’s that been like?

It’s been a godsend. I mean, I continue to do the thing that I love to do. And I recognize how fortunate I am. I wake up every day and I’m grateful for the fact that we get to continue to make these shows.

Nick Jonas hosting Billboard Music Awards

Nick Jonas is a “Sucker” for the Billboard Music Awards.

The Jonas Brothers member announced April 30 that he’ll be hosting the May 23 show on NBC and joked that he’d already been honored with the first award.

“Truly an honor to have already received the first preemptive 2021 #BBMAs award,” Jonas, 28, tweeted. “Best host ever?! Wow!”

Jonas’ gig comes after three years in a row of Kelly Clarkson, the pop star’s fellow coach on “The Voice,” hosting the show.

Alan Moore working on stories, fantasy series

British author Alan Moore, known for “V for Vendetta” and “Watchman,” among other works, has a deal with Bloomsbury for the story collection “Illuminations” and a five-volume fantasy series, “Long London.” In a statement Monday, Moore said he was “bursting with fiction, bursting with prose” and thanked his publisher for its commitment to “expanding the empire of the word.” Moore’s “Illuminations” is scheduled for fall 2022.

The first volume of “Long London” comes out in 2024.

‘Moonstruck’ actress Olympia Dukakis dies

Oscar winner Olympia Dukakis, the theater veteran who rose to prominence late in her career with memorable turns in 1980s films such as “Moonstruck” and “Steel Magnolias,” died May 1 at her home in New York City. She was 89.

The longtime stage actress was 56 when she played Cher’s sardonic mother in Norman Jewison’s romantic classic “Moonstruck” in 1987. The role earned Dukakis an Academy Award for supporting actress, a Golden Globe and a BAFTA nomination.

From wire reports

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

FCS playoffs

First Round Saturday, April 24

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

Quarterfinals Sunday, May 2

Delaware 20, Jacksonville St. 14
Sam Houston 24, North Dakota St. 20
James Madison 34, North Dakota 21
South Dakota St. 31, S. Illinois 26

Semifinals Saturday, May 8

South Dakota St. vs. Delaware
James Madison vs. Sam Houston

Championship Sunday, May 16 At Toyota Stadium Frisco, Texas

Semifinal winners

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New England	2	0	1	7	5	3
New York City FC	2	1	0	6	8	2
Orlando City	1	0	2	5	4	1
Montreal	1	0	2	5	6	4
Atlanta	1	1	1	4	4	3
Inter Miami CF	1	1	1	4	4	4
New York	1	2	0	3	5	5
D.C. United	1	2	0	3	3	6
Nashville	0	0	3	3	4	4
Columbus	0	0	2	2	0	0
Toronto FC	0	1	1	1	4	6
Philadelphia	0	2	1	1	1	4
Chicago	0	2	1	1	3	7
Cincinnati	0	2	1	1	2	10

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	2	0	1	7	8	1
San Jose	2	1	0	6	8	4
Real Salt Lake	2	0	0	6	5	2
Austin	2	1	0	6	4	3
LA Galaxy	2	1	0	6	6	7
Los Angeles FC	1	0	2	5	4	2
FC Dallas	1	1	1	4	5	4
Houston	1	1	1	4	4	4
Vancouver	1	1	1	4	3	3
Kansas City	1	1	1	4	4	5
Colorado	1	1	1	4	2	3
Portland	1	2	0	3	3	6
Minnesota United	0	3	0	0	1	7

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

Sunday, April 25

LA Galaxy 3, New York 2

Saturday, May 1

New York 2, Chicago 0
Real Salt Lake 3, Sporting Kansas City 1

Columbus 0, Montreal 0, tie
Los Angeles FC 1, Houston 1, tie
New England 2, Atlanta 1
Orlando City 3, Cincinnati 0
New York City FC 2, Philadelphia 0
Austin 1, Minnesota 0
FC Dallas 4, Portland 1
San Jose 4, D.C. United 1

Sunday, May 2

Miami 0, Nashville 0, tie
Seattle 3, LA Galaxy 0
Colorado 1, Vancouver 0

Friday, May 7

San Jose at Real Salt Lake

Saturday, May 8

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

Sunday, May 9

Atlanta at Miami
Seattle at Portland
Austin at Sporting Kansas City

Wednesday, May 12

Columbus at Toronto FC
New England at Philadelphia
Montreal at Miami
Sporting Kansas City at Houston
Vancouver at Minnesota
Seattle at San Jose

Thursday, May 13

Chicago at D.C. United

AUTO RACING

Buschy McBusch 400

NASCAR Cup Series

Sunday

At Kansas Speedway

Kansas City, Kan.

Lap length: 1.50 miles

(Start position in parentheses)

- (9) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 267 laps, 59 points.
- (4) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 267, 40.
- (1) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 267, 48.
- (5) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford, 267, 33.
- (17) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 267, 43.
- (15) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 267, 35.
- (11) Tyler Reddick, Chevrolet, 267, 41.
- (16) Chris Buescher, Ford, 267, 29.
- (2) William Byron, Chevrolet, 267, 34.
- (6) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 267, 27.
- (21) Daniel Suarez, Chevrolet, 267, 26.
- (20) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 267, 35.
- (3) Michael McDowell, Ford, 267, 24.
- (24) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 267, 23.
- (28) Kurt Busch, Chevrolet, 267, 22.
- (14) Ryan Newman, Ford, 267, 21.
- (29) Joey Logano, Ford, 267, 20.
- (25) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 267, 19.
- (32) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 267, 37.
- (19) Chase Briscoe, Ford, 267, 17.
- (7) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 267, 24.
- (38) Austin Cindric, Ford, 267, 0.
- (22) Anthony Alfredo, Ford, 266, 14.
- (10) Cole Custer, Ford, 266, 13.
- (27) Erik Jones, Chevrolet, 266, 12.
- (13) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 266, 11.
- (26) Corey Lajoie, Chevrolet, 265, 10.
- (8) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 265, 12.
- (18) Aric Almirola, Ford, 264, 8.
- (31) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, 263, 0.
- (30) BJ McLeod, Ford, 260, 0.
- (12) Ryan Preece, Chevrolet, accident, 259, 5.
- (36) Garrett Smithley, Chevrolet, 259, 0.
- (23) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, accident, 258, 3.
- (35) Joey Gase, Chevrolet, 258, 0.
- (36) Cody Ware, Chevrolet, 257, 0.
- (34) Quin Houff, Chevrolet, 256, 1.
- (38) Matt Mills, Ford, 255, 0.
- (37) Josh Billicki, Ford, 250, 1.

Race Statistics

Average Speed of Race Winner: 129.649 mph.
Time of Race: 3 hours, 5 minutes, 21 seconds.

Margin of Victory: 0.336 seconds.

Caution Flags: 7 for 36 laps.

Lead Changes: 18 among 6 drivers.

Lap Leaders: B.Keselowski 0-63; K.Larson 64; B.Keselowski 65-73; K.Larson 74-76; Ky.Busch 77-83; K.Larson 84-121; R.Stenhouse 122-144; K.Larson 145-162; Ky.Busch 163; K.Larson 164-167; Ky.Busch 168; K.Larson 169-212; C.Buescher 213-225; K.Larson 226-230; D.Hamlin 231; K.Larson 232-236; D.Hamlin 237-242; K.Larson 243-256; Ky.Busch 257-267

Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Led, Laps Led): K.Larson, 9 times for 132 laps; B.Keselowski, 2 times for 72 laps.

XPEL 375

IndyCar

Sunday

At Texas Motor Speedway

Fort Worth, Texas.

Lap length: 1.5 miles

(Start position in parentheses)

- (4) Pato O'Ward, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248 laps, Running.
- (6) Josef Newgarden, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248, Running.
- (9) Graham Rahal, Dallara-Honda, 248, Running.
- (1) Scott Dixon, Dallara-Honda, 248, Running.
- (10) Colton Herta, Dallara-Honda, 248, Running.
- (8) Simon Pagenaud, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248, Running.
- (2) Alex Palou, Dallara-Honda, 248, Running.
- (7) Scott McLaughlin, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248, Running.
- (12) Rinus VeeKay, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248, Running.
- (21) Ryan Hunter-Reay, Dallara-Honda, 248, Running.
- (19) Ed Carpenter, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248, Running.
- (13) Marcus Ericsson, Dallara-Honda, 248, Running.
- (3) Will Power, Dallara-Chevrolet, 248, Running.
- (11) Takuma Sato, Dallara-Honda, 247, Running.
- (20) Tony Kanaan, Dallara-Honda, 246, Running.
- (17) Felix Rosenqvist, Dallara-Chevrolet, 246, Running.
- (5) Jack Harvey, Dallara-Honda, 115, Did not finish.
- (22) James Hinchcliffe, Dallara-Honda, 30, Did not finish.
- (14) Sebastien Bourdais, Dallara-Chevrolet, Did not finish.
- (15) Alexander Rossi, Dallara-Honda, Did not finish.
- (16) Pietro Fittipaldi, Dallara-Honda, Did not finish.
- (18) Ed Jones, Dallara-Honda, Did not finish.
- (23) Dalton Kellett, Dallara-Chevrolet, Did not finish.
- (24) Conor Daly, Dallara-Chevrolet, Did not finish.

Race Statistics

Average Speed of Race Winner: 169.360 mph.

Time of Race: 02:06:31.1155.

Margin of Victory: 1.2443 seconds.

Cautions: 3 for 35 laps.

Lead Changes: 12 among 9 drivers.

Lap Leaders: Dixon 1-70, Palou 71-73, Carpenter 74, VeeKay 75-79, Dixon 80-139, Rahal 140-152, Dixon 153-185, O'Ward 186, Power 187, Newgarden 188-189.

DEALS

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball

MLB — Suspended Philadelphia LHP Jose Alvarado three games and fined an undisclosed amount for inciting a benches-clearing incident during an April 30 game against the New York Mets.

American League

CLEVELAND INDIANS — Sent LHP Oliver Perez outright to Columbus (Triple-A East).

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Recalled RHP James Hoyt from alternate training site. Placed LHP Tony Watson on the 10-day IL, retroactive to April 29.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Placed RHP J.B. Wendelken and LHP Jesus Luzardo on the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Jordan Weems and LHP Adam Kolarek from alternate training site.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Traded C Jacob Nottingham to Milwaukee in exchange for cash considerations. Recalled RHP Erik Swanson from alternate training site. Placed RHP Casey Sadler on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 1.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Activated RHP Ross Stripling from the 10-day IL. Recalled C Riley Adams and LHP Anthony Kay from alternate training site. Placed RHP Anthony Castro, LHP Tommy Milone and C Alejandro Kirk on the 10-day IL.

ATLANTA BRAVES — Placed catchers Travis d'Arnaud on the 60-day IL and Alex Jackson on the 10-day IL. Recalled C William Contreras from alternate training site. Selected the contract of C Jeff Mathis.

CINCINNATI REDS — Activated 2B Jonathan India from the 10-day IL. Optioned LF Mark Payton to alternate training site. Designated LHP Phillip Diehl for assignment. Claimed RHP Ashton Goudeau off waivers from Colorado.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Selected the contract of LHP Mike Kickham. Placed RHPs Dustin May on the 10-day IL and Corey Knebel on the 60-day IL.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Traded RHP Paxton Schulttz to Toronto to complete the Feb. 15 trade of OF Derek Fisher. Optioned C Mario Feliciano to alternate training site. Recalled RHP Dylan File from Biloxi (Double-A South) and placed on the 60-day IL.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Optioned CF Mickey Moniak to alternate training site. Activated CF Roman Quinn from the 10-day IL.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Optioned LHP Nick Ramirez to alternate training site. Activated RHP Keone Kela from the 10-day IL.

BASKETBALL

Women's National Basketball Association

WASHINGTON MYSTICS — Waived FTyra Whitehead.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Signed G Amir Miftakhov to a three-year, entry-level contract beginning in the 2021-22 season.

TENNIS

Madrid Open

Monday

At Caja Magica

Madrid

Purse: Euro 2,614,465

Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles

Round of 64

John Isner, United States, def. Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 6-4, 7-6 (6).

Men's Doubles

Round of 32

Jean-Julien Rojer, Netherlands, and Marcelo Melo, Brazil, def. Bruno Soares, Brazil, and Jamie Murray (8), Britain, 6-3, 6-4.

Women's Doubles

Round of 16

Zhang Shuai and Xu Yifan (7), China, def. Sharon Fichman, Canada, and Giuliana Olmos, Mexico, 6-4, 6-3.

Estoril Open

Sunday

At Clube de Tenis do Estoril

Estoril, Portugal

Purse: Euro 419,470

Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles

Championship

Nikoloz Basilashvili (5), Georgia, def. Jan-Lennard Struff (7), Germany, 6-4, 7-6 (5).

Men's Doubles

Championship

Kevin Krawietz, Germany, and Wesley Koolhof (1), Netherlands, def. Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen (3), Belgium, 4-6, 6-4, 10-5.

GOLF

Valspar Championship

PGA Tour

Sunday

At Innisbrook Resort

Cooperhead Course

Palm Harbor, Fla.

Purse: \$6.9 million

Yardage: 7,340; Par: 71

Final Round

Sam Burns, \$1,242,000	67-63-69-68—267-17
Keegan Bradley, \$752,100	64-66-69-71—270-14
Viktor Hovland, \$407,100	69-69-68-65—271-13
Cameron Tringale, \$407,100	69-67-67-68—271-13
Abraham Ancer, \$282,900	67-70-66-69—272-12
Max Homa, \$241,500	66-68-66-74—274-10
Vaughn Taylor, \$241,500	70-67-69-68—274-10
Troy Merritt, \$201,825	68-69-68-70—275-9
Joaquin Niemann, \$201,825	68-68-67-72—275-9
Louis Oosthuizen, \$201,825	73-67-66-69—275-9
Brandt Snedeker, \$167,325	69-69-67-71—276-8
Camilo Villegas, \$167,325	71-69-71-67—276-8
Bronson Burgoon, \$127,305	67-68-68-70—277-7
Jason Kokrak, \$127,305	66-69-71-71—277-7
Hank Lebioda, \$127,305	69-71-67-70—277-7
Justin Thomas, \$127,305	70-67-68-72—277-7
Bubba Watson, \$127,305	68-66-70-74—278-6
Ted Potter, Jr., \$98,325	67-73-63-75—278-6
Adam Schenk, \$98,325	71-69-71-67—278-6
Paul Casey, \$65,291	68-71-72-68—279-5
Corey Connors, \$65,291	70-68-70-71—279-5
Russell Knox, \$65,291	69-70-70-70—279-5
Danny Lee, \$65,291	70-67-70-72—279-5
Matthew NeSmith, \$65,291	70-69-69-71—279-5
Michael Walker, \$65,291	73-68-70-68—279-5
Ian Poulter, \$65,291	69-71-69-70—279-5
Charl Schwartzel, \$65,291	70-65-74-70—279-5
Michael Gligic, \$40,572	69-68-74-69—280-4
Sungjae Im, \$40,572	68-67-74-71—280-4
Zach Johnson, \$40,572	68-67-74-71—280-4
Kyounghoon Lee, \$40,572	69-69-71-71—280-4
Kevin Na, \$40,572	68-69-70-73—280-4
Pat Perez, \$40,572	68-68-72-72—280-4
Scottie Scheffler, \$40,572	73-67-66-74—280-4
Scott Stallings, \$40,572	67-69-73-71—280-4
Jimmy Walker, \$40,572	72-69-69-70—280-4
Vincent Whaley, \$40,572	69-71-70-70—280-4
Scott Brown, \$25,875	67-72-71-71—281-3
Tyler Duncan, \$25,875	70-7

AUTO RACING/SPORTS BRIEFS/NHL

RACING ROUNDUP

Busch gets birthday win

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Kyle Busch thought he had a third-place car Sunday. His crew chief, Ben Beshore, though it was good enough for second.

Both of them turned out to be wrong. Busch was perfect on a pair of late restarts and won a two-lap sprint to the finish at Kansas Speedway, becoming the 10th different winner through the first 11 races of a topsy-turvy NASCAR Cup Series season.

On his 36th birthday, no less.

“We ran up front all day,” Busch said. “Just trying to make adjustments all day long to get it where we wanted. The final adjustments were a positive for us. Didn’t necessarily take us from a third-place car to a winning car but the restarts did.”

Busch had stalked Kyle Larson all afternoon before beating him on a late restart to take the lead. Then, after another caution in the closing laps, Busch followed up his Truck Series win Saturday night by earning another trip to victory lane.

“That’s a Kyle Busch win right there,” he said with a smile.

It’s his 17th straight season with a win, tying David Pearson for second on the all-time list and moving him within one of Richard Petty’s record streak. It also was his first with Beshore calling the shots from the pit box, and it gives Joe Gibbs Racing three drivers qualified for the playoffs along with Martin Truex Jr. and Christopher Bell.

“I felt like we were a second-place car to the 5 car all day, to be honest,” Beshore said. “Kyle just did an amazing job on the last couple of restarts there, taking the lead and then keeping it on the last couple.”

Kevin Harvick overcame a tire mishap on a late pit stop and took advantage of some chaos on the final restart to finish second. Brad Keselowski dominated the early laps before following his win at Talladega last week by finishing third, and Matt DiBenedetto and Chase Elliott rounded out the top five.

Larson led a race-high 132 laps before his day ended

in 19th place and bitter disappointment.

Even after he was beaten by Busch on that late restart, he had another chance when Bell got sideways in Turn 4 to bring out another caution. But on the restart with two laps to go, Larson got trapped behind Ryan Blaney and wound up getting him sideways while trying to give him a push, taking both of them out of contention.

“I planned on pushing Blaney as hard as I could,” Larson said, “and I guess I was pushing too hard.”

Denny Hamlin, also searching for his first win, had a similarly frustrating finish. He had taken the lead on a restart with 32 to go before Larson applied pressure from behind and Hamlin wound up slapping the wall to bring out a caution.

O’Ward gets first IndyCar win

FORT WORTH, Texas — Pato O’Ward felt calm while he enjoyed the ride in the closing laps in Texas, getting his first IndyCar Series victory at the track closest to the Mexican-born driver’s hometown.

“It’s really cool to do it in a place that’s very close to my heart, is very close to home,” said O’Ward, whose win came four days before his 22nd birthday. “It’s a great place to do it. A lot of my family was here, so it’s really cool to share this moment with them.”

O’Ward passed Josef Newgarden with 23 laps to go Sunday and stayed in front the rest of the way in the No. 5 for Arrow McLaren SP. The organization will now follow through with a promise to let O’Ward test a Formula One car at the end of this year.

The race was the second in as many days at Texas, and was marred by the IndyCar’s second first-lap crash of the season.

Six cars were done before they reached the green flag, when Pietro Fittipaldi hit Sebastien Bourdais from behind, knocking the four-time open-wheel champion into Alexander Rossi. The cars of Ed Jones, Dalton Kellest and Conor Daly also were destroyed in the crash that happened as they approached the start-finish line for first time.



DUANE BURLESON / AP

Detroit Red Wings defenseman Filip Hronek is knocked into Detroit goaltender Jonathan Bernier, right, by Tampa Bay Lightning center Tyler Johnson (9) during a 2-1 win by the Lightning Sunday in Detroit.

NHL scoreboard

East Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Pittsburgh	52	34	15	3	71	178	142
x-Washington	51	32	14	5	69	175	152
x-N.Y. Islanders	51	31	15	5	67	143	114
Boston	50	30	14	6	66	150	123
N.Y. Rangers	52	26	20	6	58	167	139
Philadelphia	51	22	22	7	51	144	186
New Jersey	51	17	27	7	41	136	178
Buffalo	52	13	32	7	33	126	185

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Carolina	51	34	10	7	75	166	121
x-Tampa Bay	52	35	14	3	73	172	131
x-Florida	53	34	14	5	73	175	148
Nashville	52	28	22	2	58	142	146
Dallas	51	21	17	13	55	140	133
Chicago	51	22	23	6	50	146	167
Detroit	54	18	27	9	45	118	164
Columbus	52	16	25	11	43	123	172

West Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vegas	50	36	12	2	74	168	110
x-Colorado	49	33	12	4	70	171	120
x-Minnesota	50	32	14	4	68	162	135
St. Louis	49	23	19	7	53	147	154
Arizona	52	22	24	6	50	139	163
San Jose	51	20	26	5	45	138	176
Los Angeles	49	19	24	6	44	130	147
Anaheim	52	16	29	7	39	116	166

North Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Toronto	51	33	13	5	71	172	133
Edmonton	49	30	17	2	62	158	131
Winnipeg	50	27	20	3	57	153	143
Montreal	50	23	18	9	55	145	145
Calgary	50	22	25	3	47	132	144
Ottawa	51	19	27	5	43	141	177
Vancouver	45	19	23	3	41	119	147

x-clinched playoff spot

Sunday’s game

Tampa Bay 2, Detroit 1

Monday’s games

Boston at New Jersey
Chicago at Carolina
Dallas at Florida
N.Y. Islanders at Buffalo
Nashville at Columbus
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia
Toronto at Montreal
Washington at N.Y. Rangers
Winnipeg at Ottawa
Anaheim at St. Louis
Vegas at Minnesota
Edmonton at Vancouver
Los Angeles at Arizona
Colorado at San Jose

Tuesday’s games

Boston at New Jersey
Chicago at Carolina
N.Y. Islanders at Buffalo
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia
Edmonton at Vancouver

Wednesday’s games

Dallas at Tampa Bay
Montreal at Ottawa
Nashville at Columbus
Washington at N.Y. Rangers
Anaheim at St. Louis
Vegas at Minnesota
Colorado at San Jose
Winnipeg at Calgary
Los Angeles at Arizona

Lightning hold off Red Wings

BY LARRY LAGE

Associated Press

DETROIT — The defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning have not lost a game this season when leading after two periods. The last two NHL teams to pull off that feat in the regular season — Pittsburgh in 2016 and Chicago in 2015 — went on to hoist the Cup.

“I like those stats,” Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said after the Lightning beat the Detroit Red Wings 2-1 on Sunday, holding onto a lead after 40 minutes for the 25th time this year.

Blake Coleman scored 16 seconds into the game, Mikhail Sergachev added another goal early in the second period, and the Lightning killed three penalties late in the game.

“It’s definitely not the way you draw it up, taking three penalties consecutive, but the kill was championship hockey,” Coleman said. “That’s how you have to close out games.”

Tampa Bay’s Christopher Gibson had 22 saves, filling in for star goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy. Cooper said the team has a plan for how to use Vasilevskiy and that included scratching him for a second straight game.

Jonathan Bernier gave up a goal on the game’s first shot and finished with 40 saves for the Red Wings, who went 0-for-4 on the power play.

“Our goaltending has been very good, and our power play hasn’t been good enough,” coach Jeff Blashill said. “Bernie was good, and when we needed our power play to score, they didn’t.”

The Lightning are 5-0-1 in their last six games, pulling within two points of Central Division-leading Carolina and into a tie with Florida.

BRIEFLY

Burns pulls away for first PGA title

Associated Press

PALM HARBOR, Fla. — Sam Burns figured all those close calls would eventually teach him how to win on the PGA Tour.

Twice this season, he had the 54-hole lead and failed to convert. Six other times, he was atop the leaderboard at the end of a round, just never the round that mattered — Sunday.

That changed, finally, at the Valspar Championship. And the lesson was not what he expected.

“I always felt that you had to play perfect golf to win,” Burns said after a 3-under 68 for a three-shot victory. “I always felt that you had to play your absolute best on a Sunday to win. And after those experiences I realized that it’s not the case. I was trying to do too much.”

He did just enough, and got some help from Keegan Bradley.

Tied for the lead with six holes to play, Bradley hit 8-iron short and into the water for a double bo-

gey on the par-3 13th hole, and Burns put him away with two big birdies and a celebration he had reason to feel was a long time coming.

Burns was all smiles coming up the 18th hole with a four-shot lead, and he was fighting back tears when his wife, parents and other family spilled onto the green after he won.

The victory moves him to No. 44 in the world and assures him a spot in the U.S. Open.

3-time Indy 500 champ Bobby Unser dies

Bobby Unser, a three-time Indianapolis 500 winner and part of the only pair of brothers to win “The Greatest Spectacle in Racing” has died. He was 87.

He died Sunday at his home in Albuquerque, N.M., of natural causes, Indianapolis Motor Speedway said Monday. Unser won the Indy 500 in 1968, 1975 and 1981.

His younger brother, Al, is one of only three four-time Indy 500 winners in race history.

After two years in the U.S. Air Force from 1953 to 1955 — a stint for which he was always proud — Unser turned to racing full time and became one of the greatest racers in Indianapolis Motor Speedway history.

Phillies LHP Alvarado suspended 3 games

NEW YORK — Philadelphia Phillies reliever José Alvarado was suspended three games Sunday by Major League Baseball for inciting a bench-clearing dustup with the New York Mets.

Alvarado also was fined an undisclosed amount, as were Mets outfielder Dominic Smith and pitcher Miguel Castro for their roles in two heated exchanges Friday night in Philadelphia.

Alvarado appealed the penalty and will remain eligible to pitch until the process is completed.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Philadelphia	43	21	.672	—
x-Brooklyn	43	22	.662	½
New York	36	28	.563	7
Boston	34	31	.523	9½
Toronto	27	38	.415	16½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	35	30	.538	—
Miami	35	30	.538	—
Charlotte	31	33	.484	3½
Washington	29	35	.453	5½
Orlando	20	44	.313	14½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	40	24	.625	—
Indiana	30	33	.476	9½
Chicago	26	38	.406	14
Cleveland	21	43	.328	19
Detroit	19	45	.297	21

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	36	28	.563	—
Memphis	32	31	.508	3½
San Antonio	31	32	.492	4½
New Orleans	29	35	.453	7
Houston	16	49	.246	20½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Utah	46	18	.719	—
Denver	43	21	.672	3
Portland	36	28	.563	10
Oklahoma City	21	44	.323	25½
Minnesota	20	45	.308	26½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Phoenix	46	18	.719	—
x-L.A. Clippers	43	22	.662	3½
L.A. Lakers	36	28	.563	10
Golden State	32	32	.500	14
Sacramento	27	37	.422	19

x-clinched playoff spot Sunday's games

Milwaukee 117, Brooklyn 114
 Portland 129, Boston 119
 New York 122, Houston 97
 Miami 121, Charlotte 111
 Phoenix 123, Oklahoma City 120
 Sacramento 111, Dallas 99
 Philadelphia 113, San Antonio 111, OT
 Toronto 121, L.A. Lakers 114

Monday's games

Indiana at Washington
 Orlando at Detroit
 Golden State at New Orleans
 Portland at Atlanta
 New York at Memphis
 Philadelphia at Chicago
 Denver at L.A. Lakers
 San Antonio at Utah

Tuesday's games

Charlotte at Detroit
 Phoenix at Cleveland
 Brooklyn at Milwaukee
 Dallas at Miami
 Golden State at New Orleans
 Sacramento at Oklahoma City
 Toronto at L.A. Clippers

Wednesday's games

Boston at Orlando
 Portland at Cleveland
 Memphis at Minnesota
 Philadelphia at Houston
 Phoenix at Atlanta
 Sacramento at Indiana
 Washington at Milwaukee
 New York at Denver
 San Antonio at Utah

Leaders

Through Sunday

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Curry, GS	56	572	316	1751	31.3
Beal, WAS	55	607	374	1707	31.0
Embiid, PHI	45	419	428	1319	29.3

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Capela, ATL	57	275	552	827	14.5
Gobert, UTA	63	210	635	845	13.4

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Westbrook, WAS	57	627	11.0
Young, ATL	56	527	9.4

Antetokounmpo lifts Bucks past Nets

Two-time reigning MVP scores 49; Middleton adds 26, 11 rebounds

By CHARLES F. GARDNER
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo played how he wants to play, and it was enough to overcome a terrific effort by Kevin Durant.

Antetokounmpo scored 49 points and Khris Middleton had 26 points and 11 rebounds, leading the Milwaukee Bucks to a 117-114 victory over Durant and the Brooklyn Nets on Sunday.

Antetokounmpo also had eight rebounds, four assists and three blocked shots. The two-time reigning NBA MVP went 21-for-36 from the field, including a 4-for-8 performance from three-point range.

"I've been working on a jump shot my whole life," Antetokounmpo said. "I know eventually one day it's all going to click."

"Tonight that picture I created, that's who I want to be moving forward. It doesn't matter if I score 49 points. I don't care about that. What I care about is how I slowed down, how I was able to find my teammates. How if I missed one, missed a second one, missed a third one and still be able to come down and shoot another one. This



MORRY GASH/AP

The Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo dunks in front of the Brooklyn Nets' DeAndre Jordan and Kyrie Irving. Antetokounmpo had 49 points in his team's 117-114 win Sunday in Milwaukee.

is what I believe I can be."

The Bucks (40-24) won for the third time in four games to pull within 2½ games of the Nets (43-22) in the three-way battle for the top spot in the Eastern Conference. Philadelphia is on top at 42-21 heading into its matchup with

San Antonio on Sunday night.

Milwaukee hosts Brooklyn again on Tuesday night.

"Every day you wake up is about your craft," Durant said. "We've just got to stay locked in mentally to what we're trying to do as a group."

Durant had 42 points and 10 rebounds for Brooklyn, but he missed a difficult fadeaway three-pointer at the buzzer. Kyrie Irving scored 20 points, and Landry Shamet finished with 17.

Durant was 7 of 13 from three-point range and 16-for-33 overall.

ROUNDUP

Lowry leads depleted Raptors past Lakers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kyle Lowry had 37 points and 11 assists, Pascal Siakam had 39 points and 13 rebounds and the short-handed Toronto Raptors defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 121-114 on Saturday.

LeBron James had 19 points, seven rebounds and six assists before going back to the locker room with 6:42 to play. It was the second game back for James after missing 20 because of a sprained right ankle.

Toronto ended a three-game losing streak despite not having Fred VanVleet, OG Anunoby, Chris Boucher or Gary Trent Jr. available because of injuries or to rest after losing at Utah on Saturday. DeAndre' Bembry had 14 points off the bench and the Raptors led by as many as 21 to hand the defending NBA champion Lakers another baffling defeat.

Kyle Kuzma had 24 points for Los Angeles, Anthony Davis chipped in with 12 and Andre Drummond had 19 points and 11 rebounds.

Kings 111, Mavericks 99: Buddy Hield scored 27 points, Marvin Bagley III had 23 points and nine rebounds and visiting Sacramento completed a season sweep of Dallas.

All three games were in a span of 15 days, which the Mavericks finished with a 6-0 record against the other teams while going 0-3 for the second time in three seasons against the Kings.

Luka Doncic scored 30 points before getting ejected in the final minute after his second tech-



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Raptors guard Kyle Lowry, left, shoots past Lakers forward LeBron James. Lowry had 37 points and 11 assists in the Raptors' 121-114 win Sunday in Los Angeles.

nical foul in another game without European sidekick Kristaps Porzingis, who is battling right knee soreness.

76ers 113, Spurs 111: Joel Embiid had 34 points and 12 rebounds, and Philadelphia held on to win at undermanned San Antonio.

Ben Simmons tipped in the game-winner off a miss from Embiid as time expired. Embiid had four points in overtime, all on free throws.

Trail Blazers 129, Celtics 119: CJ McCollum scored 10 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter and

Portland extended its winning streak to four with a win at Boston.

Damian Lillard had 26 points and 13 assists for the Trail Blazers. Carmelo Anthony finished with 13 points — including a three-pointer with 1:08 remaining to help seal it after the Celtics pulled within two points.

Suns 123, Thunder 120: Devin Booker scored 32 points and Phoenix won at Oklahoma City.

Former Thunder guard Chris Paul had 18 points and 11 assists, and Torrey Craig added 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Suns, who shot 54%. Phoenix entered the night one-half game behind Utah for the best record in the Western Conference.

Nicks 122, Rockets 97: Julius Randle scored 31 points in three quarters to lead New York to the victory at Houston.

Randle, who had seven rebounds and six assists, scored 15 points in the third quarter to pad the lead and spent the fourth quarter on the bench with the game out of reach. He scored at least 30 points for the fourth time in five games.

Heat 121, Hornets 111: Bam Adebayo had 20 points and 10 rebounds, Jimmy Butler added 18 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and surging Miami moved into sole possession of sixth place in the Eastern Conference with a win at Charlotte.

The Heat's win combined with Boston's 129-119 loss to the Portland Trail Blazers leaves Miami (35-30) a full game ahead of the Celtics with seven games remaining.

HIGH SCHOOL/MLB



BRIAN K. McCOLLUM/For Stars and Stripes

Osan's Edward Kim won the boys D-II triple jump, the first time the event was on the Far East meet program.

Kadena, Zama join list of Pacific champs

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

Far East track and field championships are almost inherently memorable.

But the 2021 version, conducted virtually over the weekend at locations sometimes thousands of miles apart, may go down as one of the most unique.

Kadena coach Doyle Robertson's Panthers scored their first boys and girls team titles and overall Division I school banner in his seven years at the helm. Zama coach Veronica Jones and the Trojans recaptured the Division II school banner for the first time since 2017 and won the boys and girls team titles in the process.

"Considering all the obstacles that we had to overcome, this feels like a 'breath of fresh air,'" Jones said.

"I'm excited for our kids. Good news," Robertson said. "Seventh time is the charm. This was seven years in the making for me. We really busted our butts for this."

It was one of only two season-ending Far East sports championships this school year due to concerns over the coronavirus pandemic. Cross country was held in the fall and was also run virtually.

"It would have felt a little better if it had been a nonvirtual meet," Robertson said.

Each school fielded 14 individual events and team relays Thursday through Saturday, using automated timing at each school's respective track — if they had one.

That was not the case for Nile C. Kinnick in Japan and Osan and Daegu in South Korea — schools at bases without regulation tracks. Kinnick ran at Yokota, while Osan and Daegu ran at Humphreys.

Even schools with a track sometimes felt the pinch of command restrictions, Jones said. Her athletes were limited to gatherings of no more than 25, so they spread

out practicing events on certain days of the week.

"Honestly, we did not think that we could pull this off at the beginning of the season," Jones said. "I'm so pleased that it all came together in the end."

For the first time since the 2011 Far East meet, no Pacific region or meet records were broken.

"Times would have been faster if we were able to run against each other in the same meet," Humphreys coach Mark Tyler said. "Very interesting meet, when we each had to run separately."

The meet saw the debut of the triple jump, won by Kadena's Troy O'Connor and Grace Carey in D-I and Osan's Edward Kim and Alexis Jeffress in D-II.

Carey was among several multiple winners, also capturing the D-I 400 in 1 minute, 1.52 seconds. Kadena's girls swept the three relay races, Isamar Vargas won the 800, Karise Johnson the 1,600, Amayah Smith took the 3,200 and Shaunay Rose the high jump.

Kadena's Kevonte Speight took the D-I boys 200 and 300 hurdles, and the Panthers teams won the 400 and 1,600 relays. O'Connor also won the long jump, Kadena's Andrew Wake the high jump and Keith Toncu the 800.

Zama's girls took the D-II 400 and 1,600 relays, Madison Anderson captured the long jump and the 100 and Theori Lindsay took the high jump. On the boys side, the Trojans won the 400 and 3,200 relays and Kalil Irby took the high jump.

Among other multiple winners, Yokota's Aiko Galvin took the D-II 400, 800 and 1,600, after battling a hip flexor injury most of the school year.

"Her speed is almost there, but her stamina could get better," said her father and coach, Dan Galvin.

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Slump: Offensive averages down to record-low levels through April

FROM PAGE 24

and under the record low of .237 set in the infamous 1968 season that resulted in a lower pitcher's mound.

The Mendoza line may not mean what it used to.

Strikeouts have averaged 9.06 per team per game, on pace to set a record for the 13th consecutive full season — up from 8.81 two years ago and nearly double the 4.77 in 1979. Strikeouts already are 1,092 ahead of hits, just three years after exceeding hits for the first time over a full season.

Hits are averaging a record-low 7.63 after fluctuating from 8 to 10 from 1937 through last year, excepting 1968's dip to a then-alarming 7.91.

While it's a bear market for batters, pitchers are on bull runs.

Joe Musgrove of San Diego and Carlos Rodón of the Chicago White Sox became the second pair of pitchers in a half-century to throw April no-hitters, the first since Atlanta's Kent Mercker and Minnesota's Scott Erickson in 1994. Arizona's Madison Bumgarner pitched another, but the shortened seven-inning gem in a doubleheader was not recognized by MLB.

Mattingly, a six-time All-Star, never struck out more than 43 times in a season during a career from 1982-92.

Texas slugger Joey Gallo already has whiffed 40 times, as has Cincinnati's Eugenio Suárez.

"Pitching has always been further ahead in the analytical world, and applying information to the competition has been much faster on the run-prevention side than the run-production side," said Detroit Tigers manager A.J. Hinch, a former big league catcher.

"I have great concern that our sport has turned into a lack of offense and the strikeout-homer-walk Three True Outcomes is not our best entertainment product. ... We're trending in the wrong direction. It doesn't mean we can just snap our fingers and make a rule change or do one simple thing and all of a sudden we're going to turn into a more balanced sport."

Detroit finished April with a .199 batting average, on track to shatter the low of .211 set by the 1910 Chicago White Sox.

Just 16.6% of pitches have been put in play this season through midweek, according to MLB Statcast, matching last year and down from 18.6% in 2015.

Perhaps it's the Rawlings baseballs, which were slightly deadened this year in a change MLB said an independent lab found would cause balls to fly 1 to 2 feet shorter when hit over 375 feet. Or maybe it's the five teams that add-



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

New York Mets \$341 million star shortstop Francisco Lindor is batting .189. Averages are down across the league this season, with April's .232 league-wide batting average the lowest during that month since .230 in 1968, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

ed humidors to their stadiums, raising the total to 10 of 30 with humidity-controlled storage spaces.

Home runs have dropped from a record 1.39 per team per game in 2019 to 1.28 in 2020's shortened season to 1.14 this year, the lowest since 2015.

Data shows pitchers are throwing harder in the analytic age, where many big leaguers have had their mechanics analyzed at Driveline Baseball, Cressey Sports Performance or the American Sports Medicine Institute in an effort to gain velocity, efficiency and durability.

The average four-seam fastball velocity was 93.5 mph, according to Statcast, up from 93.4 mph last year and 92.9 mph in 2015.

And batters have refined their swing paths in an effort to hit home runs, less distressed about strikeouts than Ruth & Gehrig or even Willie, Mickey & the Duke.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred declined comment, saying it was only one month. Union head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman, also declined comment.

Many baseball veterans try not to draw conclusions from Aprils, when cold and blustery weather can hold down offense. Still, a comparison to previous seasons through April is startling.

The batting average was the lowest through April since .230 in 1968, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. The .309 on-base percentage was the lowest since .294 in 1968 and the .3894 slugging percentage a mark not seen since 2014's .3389, Elias said.

"It's an inconsistent weather month, which tends to depress offense a little bit. I tend to kind of hold off judgment until we get into the summer months," New York

Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "I would say pitching now is as good as it's been and as specific as it been."

Jacob deGrom of the Mets has a 0.51 ERA, on track to break the post dead-ball era record of 1.12 set by the St. Louis Cardinals' Bob Gibson in 1968.

"You see deGrom — you can see guys go out and punch out 14, 15, you're like, OK, it's not like not that big of a deal anymore," Mattingly said. "It seems like teams are striking out 12, 15 times a night, and that's just normal."

MLB instituted a new rule in 2020 requiring a pitcher to face three batters or complete a half-inning. Among the experiments in the minor leagues that start Tuesday are requiring Double-A infielders to keep both feet in the infield at the start of every play; and expanding bases from 15-by-15 inches to 18-by-18 at Triple-A. In the independent Atlantic League starting Aug. 3, the pitching rubber will be moved back 12 inches to 61 feet, 6 inches.

In a sign of pitching dominance, there have been 69 team shutouts this season, a pace that would total 439 and smash the record of 359 in 1915. Even accounting for additional games caused by expansion, the percentage of games in which a team failed to score would trail only 1972 and 1968 since the end of the dead-ball era in 1919.

"I think the big thing nobody talks about is the proliferation of the breaking ball," Los Angeles Angels manager Joe Maddon said. "Everybody's worried about velocity. It's about the breaking ball to me. That's where a lot of the numbers have gone to. Hitters normally could catch up to the velocity, if that's all they're going to see."

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	17	12	.586	—
Toronto	14	12	.538	1½
New York	14	14	.500	2½
Tampa Bay	14	15	.483	3
Baltimore	13	15	.464	3½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Kansas City	16	10	.615	—
Chicago	15	12	.556	1½
Cleveland	13	13	.500	3
Minnesota	10	16	.385	6
Detroit	8	21	.276	9½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oakland	17	12	.586	—
Seattle	16	13	.552	1
Houston	15	13	.536	1½
Los Angeles	13	13	.500	2½
Texas	13	16	.448	4
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington	12	12	.500	—
New York	11	11	.500	—
Philadelphia	13	15	.464	1
Atlanta	12	16	.429	2
Miami	11	16	.407	2½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	17	11	.607	—
St. Louis	16	12	.571	1
Cincinnati	13	14	.481	3½
Pittsburgh	12	15	.444	4½
Chicago	12	16	.429	5
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	17	11	.607	—
Los Angeles	17	12	.586	½
San Diego	16	13	.552	1½
Arizona	15	13	.536	2
Colorado	10	18	.357	7

Sunday's games	
N.Y. Yankees 2, Detroit 0	Toronto 7, Atlanta 2
Tampa Bay 5, Houston 4	Minnesota 13, Kansas City 4
Cleveland 5, Chicago White Sox 0	Texas 5, Boston 3
Oakland 7, Baltimore 5	Seattle 2, L.A. Angels 0
Washington 3, Miami 1	St. Louis 3, Pittsburgh 0
Cincinnati 13, Chicago Cubs 12, 10 innings	L.A. Dodgers 16, Milwaukee 4
San Francisco 7, San Diego 1	Arizona 8, Colorado 4
N.Y. Mets 8, Philadelphia 7	
Monday's games	
Texas at Minnesota	Cleveland at Kansas City
Tampa Bay at L.A. Angels	Toronto at Oakland
Baltimore at Seattle	Milwaukee at Philadelphia
L.A. Dodgers at Chicago Cubs	N.Y. Mets at St. Louis
San Francisco at Colorado	Pittsburgh at San Diego
Tuesday's games	
Chicago White Sox (Cease 1-0) at Cincinnati (Hoffman 2-1)	Houston (Greinke 2-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Germán 2-2)
Detroit (TBD) at Boston (Pivetta 3-0)	Texas (Gibson 3-0) at Minnesota (Happ 2-0)
Cleveland (Hentges 1-0) at Kansas City (Minor 2-1)	Tampa Bay (McClanahan 0-0) at L.A. Angels (Quintana 0-2)
Toronto (TBD) at Oakland (Irvin 2-3)	Baltimore (López 1-3) at Seattle (Dunn 1-0)
Arizona (TBD) at Miami (Alcantara 1-2)	Atlanta (Ynoa 2-1) at Washington (Ross 2-1)
Milwaukee (Lauer 1-0) at Philadelphia (Nola 2-1)	L.A. Dodgers (Kershaw 4-2) at Chicago Cubs (Alzola 1-2)
N.Y. Mets (deGrom 2-2) at St. Louis (Kim 1-0)	San Francisco (Wood 3-0) at Colorado (TBD)
Pittsburgh (Keller 1-3) at San Diego (Weathers 1-0)	
Wednesday's games	
Chicago White Sox at Cincinnati	Baltimore at Seattle
Houston at N.Y. Yankees	Detroit at Boston
Texas at Minnesota	Cleveland at Kansas City
Tampa Bay at L.A. Angels	Toronto at Oakland
San Francisco at Colorado	Arizona at Miami
Atlanta at Washington	Milwaukee at Philadelphia
L.A. Dodgers at Chicago Cubs	N.Y. Mets at St. Louis
Pittsburgh at San Diego	

ROUNDUP

Pollock has 8 RBIs in Dodgers' rout

Beaty also drives in 7 as both players hit grand slams

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — A.J. Pollock drove in eight runs and Matt Beaty knocked in seven for the Los Angeles Dodgers, with both players hitting early grand slams in a 16-4 defeat of the Milwaukee Brewers.

Pollock homered twice and doubled while Beaty went 4-for-6 and scored three times. Their slams came against Alec Bettinger (0-1), who gave up 11 runs in his big league debut.

This was the first time in franchise history that the Dodgers had two players with at least seven RBIs in the same game. The last time it happened for any major league team was on Aug. 22, 2007, when Jarrod Saltalamacchia and Ramon Vazquez each had seven RBIs for Texas in a 30-3 blowout of Baltimore.

Chris Taylor scored five runs, going 3 for 3 for the Dodgers. Julio Urias (4-0) allowed one run in seven innings.

Jacob Nottingham hit two homers for the Brewers, who reacquired him from Seattle earlier in the day.

Mets 8, Phillies 7: Pete Alonso capped New York's six-run eighth inning with a three-run double, and the Mets used a defensive meltdown by Philadelphia and a replay reversal to win on the road.

Michael Conforto snapped a tie with a bases-loaded walk against José Alvarado, driving in Jose Peraza, and Alonso followed with a liner off David Hale that split the gap in right-center for an 8-4 lead.

Yankees 2, Tigers 0: Corey Kluber handcuffed Detroit batters to earn his 100th career win with his most dominant performance since 2018, and host New York completed its first series sweep this season.

Kluber (2-2) looked like the pitcher who won AL Cy Young Awards with Cleveland in 2014 and 2017, before injuries wrecked his 2019 and 2020 seasons.

The 35-year-old right-hander allowed two hits in eight innings. He struck out 10 and walked one.

Nationals 3, Marlins 1: Max Scherzer delivered in a hurry, tossing a five-hitter to lead host Washington over Miami. The three-time Cy Young Award winner hustled out of Nationals Park after a game that took only 2 hours, 37 minutes, dashing to be with wife Erica for the birth of their third child.

Scherzer (2-2) carried a shutout into the ninth inning before Isan



AARON GASH/AP

Los Angeles Dodgers' AJ Pollock hits a grand slam during the first inning of his team's 16-4 win Sunday in over the Milwaukee Brewers. He homered again later in the game and doubled for eight RBIs.

Díaz led off with a home run. The right-hander struck out nine without a walk.

Blue Jays 7, Braves 2: Marcus Semien homered and drove in four runs as Toronto finished off a three-game sweep of Atlanta in Dunedin, Fla.

Blue Jays newcomer George Springer exited early with leg fatigue. He was the designated hitter for the fourth consecutive game since making his Toronto debut after being slowed by a strained oblique and quadriceps strain.

Rays 5, Astros 4: Austin Meadows hit a three-run homer and later scored the go-ahead run on Manuel Margot's pinch-hit single in the seventh inning as host Tampa Bay beat Houston.

The Rays avoided a three-game sweep in a series between the last two American League champions.

Twins 13, Royals 4: Andrelton Simmons and Mitch Garver homered in a seven-run third inning, and rookie Alex Kirilloff went deep for the fourth time in three games as host Minnesota routed Kansas City.

José Berríos (3-2) took advantage of his team's tear at the plate to win for the first time in four starts. Berríos gave up four runs and struck out nine in six innings.

Indians 5, White Sox 0: José Ramirez and Cesar Hernandez homered, Amed Rosario had three hits and Cleveland won at Chicago.

Zach Plesac (2-3) and three relievers limited the White Sox to four hits as the Indians took two of

three in a series between AL Central foes that both made the playoffs last year. Cleveland has won five of their last seven.

Rangers 5, Red Sox 3: David Dahl and Brock Holt each hit an RBI single in Texas' three-run eighth inning, and host Texas took advantage of a costly error by Boston outfielder Alex Verdugo.

Isiah Kiner-Falefa homered to help the Rangers take three of four from the AL East leaders. Josh Sborz (3-1) got three outs for the win, and Ian Kennedy earned his seventh save in seven opportunities.

Reds 13, Cubs 12 (10): Nick Castellanos hit a game-ending single off Craig Kimbrel (0-1) in the 10th inning to give host Cincinnati a wild win over Chicago.

Castellanos finished with five hits and four RBIs against his former team, including two of the Reds' five homers. Mike Moustakas, Eugenio Suárez and Tucker Barnhart also connected.

Cardinals 3, Pirates 0: Carlos Martínez pitched eight marvelous innings, Harrison Bader hit an early three-run homer and St. Louis shut down host Pittsburgh for a three-game sweep.

The Cardinals have won seven straight against the Pirates and is 20-6 versus Pittsburgh since the start of the 2019 season. The sweep was the second in three series for St. Louis, who have won eight of 10 overall.

Giants 7, Padres 1: Kevin Gausman pitched six effective in-

nings and scored twice, Mike Tauchman homered and drove in four runs, and San Francisco won at San Diego to prevent a three-game sweep.

Tauchman hit a three-run shot in the third off Joe Musgrove (2-3) to help the Giants remain atop the NL West.

Diamondbacks 8, Rockies 4: Stephen Vogt hit a go-ahead, two-run triple, Josh Rojas and Daulton Varsho added RBI doubles and host Arizona topped Colorado.

The game was tied at 4 when Josh VanMeter led off the Diamondbacks eighth with a walk. David Peralta singled with one out and Vogt followed with a drive down the right-field line. Arizona has won 10 of 13 since a 5-10 start.

Athletics 7, Orioles 5: Center fielder Ramón Laureano robbed Baltimore of the likely go-ahead run with a leaping catch in the eighth inning and then hit a tie-breaking, two-run homer in the bottom half to send host Oakland to a win.

Yusmeiro Petit (4-0) won in relief of starter Sean Manaea to help the Athletics avoid a sweep.

Mariners 2, Angels 0: Justus Sheffield shook off early control problems to allow just two hits over six innings, leading host Seattle over Los Angeles.

Sheffield (2-2) and four relievers combined on a five-hitter as the Mariners won two of three in the series. Rafael Montero closed for his fourth save in eight opportunities.

SPORTS



Another week, another winner

Perfect pair of late restarts help give Busch victory » Auto racing, Page 20

MLB

Swing and a miss

Baseball in midst of the worst offensive slump since '68

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

Don Mattingly starred in the action-packed 1980s. Now the Miami Marlins manager, Donnie Baseball worries about a record lack of hits — and not just from his team's bats.

"I don't think it's cyclical at this point," he said. "There's so much swing and miss, it's kind of off the charts. I think it's something that we have to address."

It's the Season of the Slump, even for All-Stars like Marcell Ozuna (.202), Charlie Blackmon (.184) and Francisco Lindor (.189). Miguel Cabrera, the only Triple Crown winner in a half-century, is batting .140.

Major league batters are hitting just .232 overall through April, down from .252 two years ago

SEE SLUMP ON PAGE 22

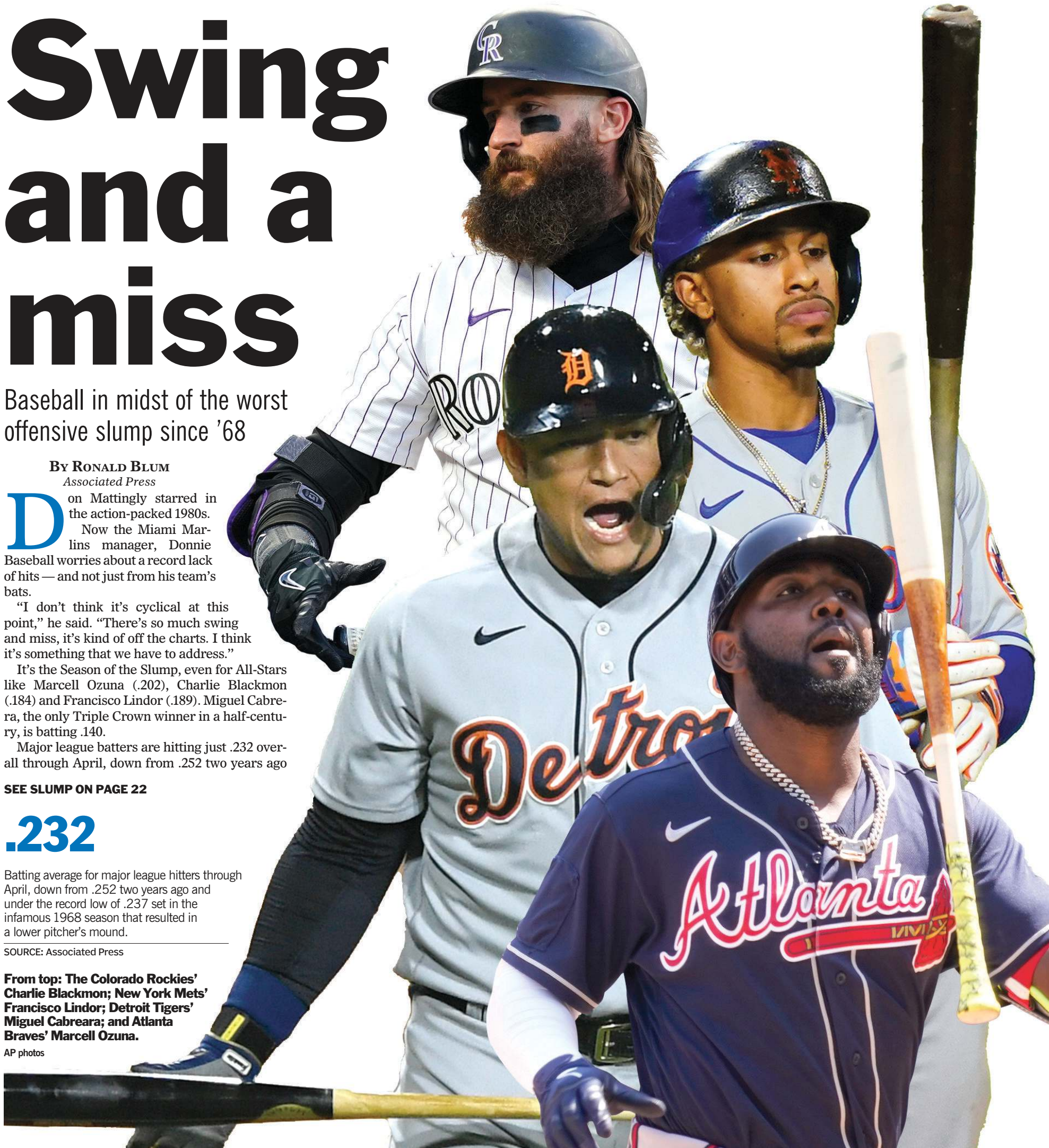
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Batting average for major league hitters through April, down from .252 two years ago and under the record low of .237 set in the infamous 1968 season that resulted in a lower pitcher's mound.

SOURCE: Associated Press

From top: The Colorado Rockies' Charlie Blackmon; New York Mets' Francisco Lindor; Detroit Tigers' Miguel Cabrera; and Atlanta Braves' Marcell Ozuna.

AP photos



Dodgers get back on track against Brewers » Page 23

