Sanders edges past Buttigieg in NH vote

Associated Press


In his Tuesday night win, the 78-year-old Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, beat back a strong challenge from the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Ind. The dueling Democrats represent different generations, see divergent paths to the nomination and embrace conflicting visions of America's future.

As Sanders and Buttigieg celebrated, Amy Klobuchar scored an unexpected third-place finish that gives her a road out of New Hampshire as the primary season moves on to the string of state-by-state contests that lie ahead.

Elizabeth Warren and Joe Biden posted disappointing fourth and fifth place finishes, respectively, and were on track to finish with zero delegates from the state.

SEE PRIMARY ON PAGE 9

Standoff in Syria

US troops return fire at pro-Assad fighters; regime claims 1 dead

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

Russian and Syrian military gather with civilians next to an American military convoy stuck in the village of Khirbet Ammu, Syria, on Wednesday. Syrian media and activists say a Syrian was killed in a clash between American troops and government supporters.

US troops return fire after being shot at by militiamen and civilians in northeastern Syria on Wednesday, the U.S. military said, in a fight that the Assad regime said left one civilian dead.

One civilian was also wounded after Syrians loyal to President Bashar Assad tried to block a convoy of several American vehicles at an army checkpoint near the town of Qamishli, state media and observers reported.

"After Coalition troops issued a series of warnings and de-escalation attempts, the patrol came under small arms fire from unknown individuals," said Col. Myles B. Caggins III, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition that is aiding local Kurdish and Arab forces battling Islamic State.

The Americans defended themselves, Caggins said in a statement posted online. The statement did not say whether anyone was killed or injured, but a later statement said one American was slightly wounded and has returned to duty.

"The situation was de-escalated and is under investigation," Caggins said. "The Coalition patrol returned to base."

SEE SYRIA ON PAGE 7

By CHAD GARLAND

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SEE SYRIA ON PAGE 7
Judge OKs T-Mobile’s Sprint deal; worries remain

By TALI ARBEL
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge has cleared a path for T-Mobile to buy Sprint for $26.5 billion, citing T-Mobile’s track record in promoting competition, even as legal scholars and consumer advocates warn about higher phone bills.

Judge Victor Marrero said he believed that the new T-Mobile would continue to compete with Verizon and AT&T, the industry giants whose size it now rivals.

T-Mobile has promised not to raise prices for three years and said that “efficiencies” it gets from a more powerful network will lead to lower prices down the road. T-Mobile also argued that the combined T-Mobile and Sprint could build a better next-generation, 5G cellular network than either company could alone.

But over a dozen state attorneys general had sued to block the deal, saying that one fewer phone company would cost Americans billions of dollars in higher bills. One of the leading parties, New York Attorney General Letitia James, said that Tuesday’s ruling “marks a loss for every American who relies on their cellphone.”

Gigi Sohn, a former Federal Communications Commission adviser who is now a fellow at Georgetown’s law school, said that “efficiencies” it gets from mergers, “what they are left with each time are corporate behemoths” that can raise prices and destroy competition.

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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#### FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC

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<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>80°F/27°C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXCHANGE RATES

- **Euro costs (Feb. 13)**: $1.1193
- **South Korean won (Feb. 13)**: $1.3150
- **South Korean won (Feb. 13)**: €0.9762

### INTEREST RATES

- **Prime rate**: 4.75%
- **Discount rate**: 2.25%
- **3-month bill**: 1.54%
- **3-year bond**: 2.65%
US, Taliban meet again

The Washington Post

Trump gives conditional approval to sign peace deal

American and Taliban negotiators were meeting Wednesday in Doha, Qatar, following a conditional decision from President Donald Trump to sign a peace deal with the Taliban, according to officials.

One U.S. official and an Afghan official briefed on the matter Wednesday said Trump gave his conditional approval to sign a peace deal with the Taliban if the insurgents can demonstrate their commitment to reducing violence in Afghanistan.

“Trump has endorsed the deal and said it must be signed,” the Afghanistan official said, explaining that when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called Afghan leaders Tuesday, he said the talks “deadlock” had been broken.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

For months U.S. negotiators have demanded a reduction in violence from the Taliban before formal talks can resume.

Last month, the Pentagon announced the reduction plan as part of a deal between the U.S. and the Taliban, who have threatened to intensify their attacks on Afghan security forces, and the U.S. military.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters Wednesday that NATO allies agree to expand mission in Iraq.

In September, U.S. negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad announced that a tentative deal had been reached with the Taliban.

Taliban negotiators presented a violence reduction proposal last month that included a reduction in violence over a period of three months.

The proposal, however, was not accepted by the Afghan government.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the Taliban are now classified, “as a precondition to talks with the Taliban, but both Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah expressed optimism about a potential “reduction in violence,” after their separate calls with Pompeo.

Both leaders however, indicated in statements on Twitter that no final agreement had been reached.

Reducing violence would be seen as an expeditious step before talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government next month, and the beginning of a U.S. troop withdrawal.

Abdullah said that a reduction in violence in Afghanistan was a priority to the U.S. government.

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Taliban negotiators presented a violence reduction proposal in January that would have ceased attacks in cities and highways.

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg: NATO allies agree to expand mission in Iraq

NATO meeting said it is impossible to ask the Afghans is how many more troops NATO will deploy to other regions such as the Middle East was expected to be high on the agenda of the NATO defense ministers’ meetings, which run until Thursday.

Tuesday’s hearing was an effort by senators to follow up on the Afghan Papers, the Washington Post’s reporting series based on hundreds of confidential interviews that SIGAR conducted with key figures of the nearly two-decade war that showed the projection of progress in Afghanistan were deliberately misleading despite overwhelming evidence the war had become an unwinnable quagmire.

“We cannot show any progress, we lost a trillion dollars, we lost thousands of lives,” said Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo. “I just don’t see what’s going on here. I don’t think anybody really knows what we’re doing.”

Sopko has been a bullhorn on the country comprises some 500 members.

NATO suspended training operations in Iraq following the killing last month by a U.S. drone of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Iraq’s political leaders complained about a violation of the country’s sovereignty and threatened to eject U.S. troops.

Meanwhile, Esper said he also like to see more NATO participation in deterring Iranian aggression in the region, and if Iranian forces could be sent to Saudi Arabia to help with air defense there, he said.

Greater NATO involvement in the Middle East was expected to be high on the agenda of the NATO defense ministers’ meetings, which run until Thursday.

By John Vandiver

U.S. allies in Europe agreed Wednesday to expand their mission there, according to a U.S. defense official on condition of anonymity.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Tuesday that the alliance’s mission in Iraq would mean some U.S. military and inter-Afghan talks, with a nationwide ceasefire.

In September, the U.S. and the Taliban government end up classifying an even-balloonling list intended to cover up the failures of the war, according to Sopko.

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**US flies along Taiwan Strait after Chinese drills**

**By Caitlin Doornbos**

**Stars and Stripes**

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Air Force flew two B-52 bombers and an MC-130 Commando II tanker along the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday morning after Chinese naval and air forces flew over the island twice this week, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense said.

The aircraft flew north to south along the airspace over the Taiwan Strait and were “closely monitored,” the defense ministry said in a statement Wednesday.

Air Force officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment Wednesday.

The 110-mile-wide strait separates mainland China from Taiwan, which Beijing regards as its own.

The U.S. considers Taiwan’s status unsettled, but adheres to the “One China” policy, acknowledging that Beijing considers Taiwan part of China. However, the Taiwan Relations Act provides a framework for the U.S. to aid the self-governing island’s defense.

The flyover comes after China held back-to-back air drills near Taiwan this week.

On Sunday, China held a “combat-readiness patrol,” sending bombers, jet fighters and early warning aircraft flying through the Bashi Channel and Miyako Strait, a Chinese Defense Ministry statement said.

Chinese fighter jets also flew Monday near the “middle line” of the Taiwan Strait, edging closer to Taiwan than mainland China, a report by China’s state-run newspaper Global Times said Tuesday.

Chinese military expert Song Zhongping told Global Times that the demonstrations “are not only warnings to Taiwan secessionists, but also demonstrations of PLA capabilities to solve the Taiwan question by force.”

Song added that the Chinese drills aimed to sharpen skills “useful in potential battles against Taiwan’s military force,” the Global Times report said.

China last made a “deep incursion” across the strait’s middle line in 2019 but hadn’t done so for 20 years prior to that, Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in Washington last month.

The drills come one month after Tsai Ing-wen was reelected Taiwan’s president on the promise of preserving the island’s sovereignty, after Chinese leader Xi Jinping described unification as “inevitable.”

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**Group helps military journalists break into civilian news careers**

**By Theron Godbold**

**Stars and Stripes**

When former Navy journalist Zack Baddorf went looking for similar work in the civilian sector, he expected his experience and veteran status would open doors.

“I built a portfolio and got my bachelor’s. I thought it would translate well to the civilian work force,” he said. “As it turned out, I was wrong; it was a tough transition.”

Baddorf, who now works for the Department of Defense, and Russell Midori, a former Marine journalist, teamed up in May to form the nonprofit Military Veterans in Journalism. They aimed to help fellow former service members find work, but also increase the number of veterans working in the media.

Military Veterans in Journalism provides a network for vets as well as tips on finding civilian jobs, Baddorf said. More than 10 volunteers help run the organization.

“My co-founder, a former Marine, went through similar issues and we sat down and thought there had to be a better way, so we decided to do this,” he said.

Baddorf, who served in the armed forces for more than 10 years, is a former Marine journalist. He said he was seeking a change and wanted to work in the civilian sector.

“It was unclear Wednesday where Sweeney is stationed. The homeowner called police on Monday after hearing noises coming from the roof, looked and found Romero, an Ishikawa Police deputy chief said. The homeowner called police. Some government officials in Japan customarily speak on condition of anonymity.

The organization is also working to set up internships and scholarships for qualified veterans, Baddorf said.

The design is directed for veterans looking for a journalism career who have little or no experience in the field. The aim is to familiarize them with the tools of the trade and arrange for them to shadow working journalists.

Baddorf, the lead national correspondent for Military Veterans in Journalism, a nonprofit formed by veterans, helps former service members find work in the media.

**2 service members arrested on Okinawa in separate incidents**

**By Matthew M. Burke and Aya Ichihashi**

**Stars and Stripes**

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An Army sergeant first class and a Marine corporal were picked up by Japanese police over the weekend in separate alcohol-related offenses.

“A resident of the Miyagi section of Chatan town summoned police at 3:38 a.m. Sunday after hearing a commotion and catching sight of Sgt. 1st Class Jonathon Levi Sweeney, 30, carrying away the resident’s kayak, Okinawa Police deput chief Horiyoshi Iha said Wednesday. The kayak was kept by the front door. It was unclear Wednesday where Sweeney is stationed.

Police found him on the street with the kayak and arrested him, Iha said. He said Sweeney told the arresting officers that “it is OK to pick up things on the street in the U.S.”

“The suspect said he does not remember stealing the kayak,” Iha said.

Sweeney’s blood alcohol content after his arrest measured 0.12, four times Japan’s legal limit for driving of 0.03, Iha said.

Police on Monday referred a theft charge against Sweeney to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office. Iha said. He was released that day.

In an unrelated incident, Marine Cpl. Wilfredo De Jesus Romero, 20, assigned to Camp Hansen, was arrested in Kin town at 1:50 a.m. Saturday after allegedly trespassing on the roof of an off-base home, police said Wednesday.

The owner of the two-story house heard noises coming from the roof, looked and found Romero, an Ishikawa Police deputy chief said. The homeowner called police. Some government officials in Japan customarily speak on condition of anonymity.

The police spokesman said Romero found his way to the roof via a flight of stairs outside the building.

Romero told police he wanted to “see the night view,” the spokesman said. His blood alcohol content after his arrest measured 0.12.

Police released Romero on Sunday and referred a trespassing charge against him to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office the same day, the police spokesman said.

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**PACIFIC**

**Stars and Stripes**

**Thursday, February 13, 2020**

**S T A R S  A N D  S T R I P E S**

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**Stars and Stripes**

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**By Matthew M. Burke and Aya Ichihashi**

**Stars and Stripes**

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**Stars and Stripes**
So you’re stationed overseas and it’s an election year... This handy flowchart on absentee voting lays it all out.

**DO YOU WANT TO VOTE IN U.S. ELECTIONS?**

**YES**

- Have you registered to vote absentee and requested your ballot?

  **YES**
  - Great! Have you received your ballot yet?
    - YES
      - Send it in like your regular ballot.
    - NO
      - NO

  **NO**
  - Yes: You’re on track. Have you filled out your ballot and sent it in?
    - YES
      - PRO TIP
        - If your regular ballot arrives, fill that out and send it in too. Don’t worry; only one ballot will be counted.
    - NO
      - NO

- If you haven’t received your state ballot in time to vote, use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) as a backup ballot. Get it at FVAP.gov.

**NO**

- If you know someone who wants to vote, share this with them!

- After you send your ballot, you can check if it was received by your election office. Get started at FVAP.gov.

**Great! Have you checked that your ballot arrived?**

  **NO**
  - Wow, you’re one squared-away voter!

  **YES**
China sees drop in new virus cases

**Associated Press**

**BEIJING** — China on Wednesday reported another drop in the number of new cases of a viral infection and 97 more deaths, pushing the total dead past 1,100 as postal services worldwide said delivery was being affected by the cancellation of many flights to China.

The National Health Commission said 2,015 new cases had been reported over the last 24 hours, declining for a second day. The total number of cases in mainland China reached 44,653, although many experts say a large number of others infected have gone uncounted.

The additional deaths raised the mainland toll to 1,113. Two people have died elsewhere, one in Hong Kong and one in the Philippines.

In the port city of Tianjin, just southeast of Beijing, a cluster of cases has been traced to a department store in Baodi district. One-third of Tianjin’s 104 confirmed cases are in Baodi, the Xinhua state news agency reported.

A salesperson working in the store’s small home appliance section became the first individual in the cluster to be diagnosed on Jan. 31, Xinhua said. The store was already closed at that point, then disinfected on Feb. 1. Nevertheless, several more diagnoses soon followed.

The next to have their infections confirmed were also salespeople at the store. They had not visited Wuhan recently and, with the exception of one married couple, the patients worked in different sections of the store and did not know one another, according to Xinhua.

Japan’s Health Ministry said that 39 new cases have been confirmed on a cruise ship quarantined at Yokohama, bringing the total to 174 on the Diamond Princess.

And in Singapore, the bank DBS on Wednesday cleared a cruise ship returning to Singapore to dock after being refused entry by a fever clinic in eastern China’s Shandong province on Wednesday.

A doctor takes a swab from a woman to test for the COVID-19 virus at a fever clinic in eastern China’s Shandong province on Wednesday.

The U.S.-operated Diamond Princess, a cruise ship carrying 2,257 passengers and crew after a 14-day tour during which it stopped in Hong Kong and several other Asian ports, was forced to return to Yokohama Port near Tokyo on Feb. 3. The quarantine official is being treated in a hospital.

The new cases bring Japan’s total to 203 people with the new disease, COVID-19.

Japan confirms 39 new virus cases, 174 total on ship

**Associated Press**

**TOKYO** — Japan’s health ministry said Wednesday that 39 new cases of a virus believed to be confirmed on a cruise ship quarantined at a Japanese port.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare said the virus, which appeared in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan, COVID-19.

Cobra Gold, co-sponsored by Thailand and the United States, began in 1982. Nearly 30 other nations attended the exercise last year. The exercise is designed to include military training, disaster-relief planning and relationship building.

Some 4,000 Americans will participate in the drills this year, according to Thai media.

S. Korea to reduce troop numbers for Cobra Gold

**By Kim Gamel and Yoo Kyong Chang**

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea tentatively plans to sharply reduce the number of troops sent to Thailand for Asia’s largest multinational military exercise due to fears about the spread of a newly new coronavirus, its navy said Wednesday.

Seoul originally planned to ship about 400 service members along with eight amphibious landing ships to the exercise. But the decision will be made this week.

“We changed the plan for the safety of our sailors,” a South Korean navy official said.

The decision comes as South Korea steps up efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, a pneumonia-like disease that has killed more than 1,000 people in China and sickened tens of thousands in several other countries.

South Korea has confirmed 28 cases, while Thailand has 33. No deaths have been reported in either country.

The World Health Organization has declared a global emergency and warned that the virus, which appeared in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan, COVID-19.

The World Health Organization has named the disease caused by the virus as COVID-19, avoiding any animal or geographic designation to avoid stigmatization and to show the illness comes from a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.

The illness was first reported in December and connected to a food market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the outbreak has largely been concentrated.

Zong Nan, a leading Chinese epidemiologist, said that while the virus outbreak in China may peak this month, the situation at the center of the crisis remains more challenging.

“We still need more time of hard working in Wuhan,” he said, describing the isolation of infected patients there a priority.

“We have to stop more people from being infected,” he said.

“The problem of human-to-human transmission has not yet been resolved.”

2 Russians flee virus quarantine at hospital

**Associated Press**

MOSCOW — One patient jumped out of a hospital window to escape her quarantine and another managed to break out by disabling an electronic lock.

Two Russian women who were kept in isolation for possible infection by a new virus say they fled from their hospitals this month after being told of the presence of contagious doctors, poor conditions and fear they would become infected. Russian health authorities haven’t commented on their complaints.

The incidents occurred amid the outbreak of the virus in China that has already infected more than 40,000 people worldwide. In Russia, only two cases of COVID-19 have been reported. Nevertheless, the authorities have taken fast measures to prevent the new disease from spreading and hospitalized hundreds of people who returned from China as a precaution.

Most of those quarantined in different Russian hospitals complained about dire conditions of isolation rooms and lack of cooperation from doctors, according to quarantine protocols.

Both women said their hospital stays began after they returned from Hainan, a tropical region in China popular with Russian tourists.
Syria: Group says US forces discharged smoke bombs’ before opening fire

FROM FRONT PAGE

The U.S. patrol was “besieged” by a crowd of both civilians and armed militias who “fired in the air,” the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported, citing local sources. The Observatory maintains a network of activists on the ground.

After the U.S. forces fired “smoke bombs,” they opened fire, the Observatory said, but it was unclear whether the person killed was a civilian or militia member. U.S. jets ripped through the air above the villages after the incident, the Observatory reported.

Photos and videos circulated on social media show an F-15 fighter jet firing a flare over the area.

The man killed was a civilian from Khirbet Ammu village, Syria’s state-run SANA news agency said. Four American vehicles were damaged, it said, and five more were sent as reinforcements.

A cellphone video from the scene shows American troops standing outside several Oshkosh M-ATVs on a rural road and began to form a concrete building. The video was posted to Twitter by Syrian Kurdish journalist Kamilan Sadoun, who said regime supporters attacked first.

A second video, posted to Twitter by journalist Mohammed Hassan, shows a crowd attacking U.S. forces with stones and shotguns. The video was posted to Twitter by Syrian army outposts have been cut off from Qamishli, he said. At least three Turkish targets “anywhere” if Turkish troops are harmed.

American troops withdrew from the village of Khirbet Ammu, east of Qamishli city, Syria, on Wednesday. U.S. troops returned fire after being shot at in northeastern Syria.

Boosted by US, Turkish president vows to expel Syrian army from Idlib

BY SELCAN HACAOGLU AND FIRAT KOZOK

Bloomberg

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to drive Russian-backed Syrian government forces from the last rebel stronghold of Idlib, escalating his threats against Damascus after being buoyed by rare public support from the U.S.

Erdogan has massed tanks and commandos in Idlib after at least 14 Turks, most of them soldiers, were killed by forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, and on Wednesday threatened to hit Syrian targets “anywhere” if Turkish troops are harmed again.

“We’re determined to drive away regime forces until the end of February” from the vicinity of Idlib, he said. At least three Turkish army outposts have been cut off in the area.

Assad’s attempt to crush Turkish-backed rebels and al-Qaida militants in the final major opposition stronghold after nine years of war has triggered fierce Turkish military retaliation, while testing key strategic alliances.

Turkey and Russia have maintained an uneasy partnership in Syria, where they back opposing sides, but disagreements over who should control Idlib are taking a toll on the relationship. On Wednesday, Russia directly accused Turkey of failing to abide by agreements meant to contain hostilities in Idlib, warning that the situation was being aggravated by the flow of Turkish troops into the province.

Walking a fine line, Erdogan has been careful not to alienate Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is backing Assad. The two spoke by phone Wednesday about the “aggravation of the situation” in Idlib.

Erdogan said he and Putin decided that military and civilian officials from both sides would hold further discussions.

Erdogan said he might soon talk with President Donald Trump on events in Syria after Ankara secured support from a visiting U.S. official in its tussle with the Assad regime.

James Jeffrey, the U.S. envoy for Syria engagement and its special representative to the global coalition to defeat Islamic State, said he had traveled to Turkey to discuss whatever support the country needed to defend its soldiers against “a threat in Idlib from Russia and the Assad government.”
Military downgrades efforts against Sahel extremists

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — The U.S. military has switched from trying to degrade Islamic extremist groups in West Africa’s sprawling Sahel region to merely trying to contain them as their deadly threat increases, a new U.S. government report says.

The quarterly report by the inspectors general for the Pentagon, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development released this week is the first to be unclassified as interest in the region’s instability grows.

Top concerns in Africa include the fast-growing threat from multiple extremist groups in the Sahel region just south of the Sahara Desert and the enduring threat by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab in Somalia, which killed three Americans in an unprecedented attack against U.S. forces in Kenya last month.

Consistent pressure on extremist groups is needed to weaken them, the report says, citing Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who has compared it to “mowing the lawn.” That need, along with the often slow development of local partners’ militaries, “could require ongoing commitment of U.S. military resources,” the report adds.

The new report also says that the U.S. Africa Command has expressed concerns to the Pentagon’s inspector general that some resources will be moved from Somalia to the North African nation of Libya, where a conflict between rival governments has drawn the attention of powers including Russia and Turkey.

About 6,000 U.S. military personnel are deployed across Africa, the report says, including 500 special operations forces in Somalia and about 900 personnel in West Africa.

The security situation in Burkina Faso “is deteriorating faster than anywhere else in the Sahel,” says the new report, citing AFRICOM. The West African nation is staggering under a growing number of extremist attacks, as fighters move in from neighboring Mali. Hundreds of civilians have been killed and hundreds of thousands have fled.

Extremist groups linked to the Islamic State group and al-Qaida in West Africa “are neither degraded nor contained,” the new report warns, citing AFRICOM.

The new U.S. military strategy has changed from trying to degrade, or reduce the effectiveness, of those extremist groups in the Sahel to trying to keep them from growing their membership and spreading into new areas, AFRICOM told the Pentagon inspector general in the quarter ending Dec. 31.

Mali’s president this week told French media outlets his government is now in contact with leaders of the most active extremist group, the al-Qaida-linked JNIM, a sign that troubled West African countries are exploring various options, including negotiations, to curb the threat.

JNIM has about 1,000 to 2,000 fighters, and its goal is to “unite all terrorist groups in the Sahel and eliminate Western influence in the region,” the new U.S. report says.

Trump wants Pentagon to review conduct of impeachment witness

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump suggested Tuesday that the Pentagon should review the conduct of a former White House national security aide who played a central role in the Democrats’ impeachment case and potentially consider disciplinary action against him.

Army Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who, until last week, was detailed by the Pentagon to the White House to testify before the House impeachment panel that Trump inappropriately pushed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter.

Vindman was ousted from his job on the White House National Security Council on Friday, just two days after the Senate acquitted Trump on abuse of power and obstruction of justice charges. He is to be reassigned by the Pentagon. His twin brother, Lt. Col. Yevgeny Vindman, who worked as an ethics lawyer at the NSC, was also ousted from his job and was re-assigned to the Army General Counsel’s Office.

Trump has already been sharply critical for pushing out Alexander Vindman and others who crossed him in the impeachment hearings.

Asked whether he wanted to see Vindman face discipline, Trump said that military officials “can handle him any way they want,” but also suggested that he expected commanders to review the decorated, 20-year officer’s conduct.

“That’s going to be up to the military,” Trump said. “We’ll have to see. They are certainly, I imagine, going to take a look at that.”

Robert O’Brien, Trump’s national security adviser, said last Tuesday that Alexander Vindman was not asked to leave his White House job in retaliation for his testimony in the Democrats’ impeachment case.

“There’s absolutely no retaliation with respect to the Vindmans as far as impeachment goes,” O’Brien said at an event hosted by the Atlantic Council. “But the president is entitled to a staff that he has confidence in and that he believes will execute his policy.”

Trump wants Pentagon to review conduct of impeachment witness
NATION

Primary: Sanders, Buttigieg solid, Klobuchar a surprising 3rd in Granite State

The New Hampshire vote gives new clarity to a Democratic contest shaping up to be a battle between two men separated by four decades in age and clashing political ideologies. Sanders is a leading progressive voice, having spent decades demanding substantial government intervention in health care and other sectors of the economy. Buttigieg has pressed for more incremental change, preferring to give Americans the option of retaining their private health insurance while appealing to Republicans and independents who may be dissatisfied with President Donald Trump.

Their disparate temperaments were on display Tuesday as they spoke before cheering supporters.

“We are gonna win because we have the agenda that speaks to the needs of working people across this country,” Sanders declared. “This victory here is the beginning of the end for Donald Trump.”

Buttigieg struck an optimistic tone: “Thanks to you, a campaign that some said shouldn’t be here at all has shown that we are here to stay.”

Both men have strength heading into the next phase of the campaign, yet they face very different political challenges.

While Warren made clear she will remain in the race, Sanders, well-financed and with an ardent army of supporters, has cemented his status as the clear leader of the party to contend with. They include Klobuchar, whose standout debate performance led to a late surge in New Hampshire and a growing national following. While deeply wounded, Biden promises strength in upcoming South Carolina. And though former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg was not on Tuesday’s ballot, he looms next month when the contest reaches states offering hundreds of delegates.

After a chaotic beginning to primary voting last week in Iowa, Democrats hoped New Hampshire would help give shape to their urgent quest to pick someone to take on Trump in November. At least three candidates dropped out in the wake of weak finishes Tuesday night: moderate Colorado

And unlike Sanders, he still has multiple rivals in his own ideological wing of the party to contend with. They include Klobuchar, whose standout debate performance led to a late surge in New Hampshire and a growing national following. While deeply wounded, Biden promises strength in upcoming South Carolina. And though former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg was not on Tuesday’s ballot, he looms next month when the contest reaches states offering hundreds of delegates.

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Former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg speaks to supporters in Nashua, N.H., after his second-place finish in Tuesday’s Democratic primary.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., shown speaking in Concord, N.H., on Tuesday night, finished third in New Hampshire, and was allocated six delegates.

Sen. Michael Bennet, former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick and political newcomer Andrew Yang, who attracted a small but loyal following over the past year. The struggling candidates still in the race sought to minimize the latest results.

Warren, who spent months as a Democratic front-runner, offered an optimistic outlook as she faced cheering supporters: “Our campaign is built for the long haul, and we are just getting started.”

Having already predicted he would “take a hit” in New Hampshire after a distant fourth-place finish in Iowa, Biden essentially ceded the state. He traveled to South Carolina on Tuesday as he bet his candidacy on a strong showing there later this month boosted by support from black voters.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., shown speaking in Concord, N.H., on Tuesday night, finished third in New Hampshire, and was allocated six delegates.

Still, history suggests that the first-in-the-nation primary will have enormous influence shaping the 2020 race. In the modern era, no Democrat has ever become the party’s general election nominee without finishing first or second in New Hampshire.

Sanders and Buttigieg were on track to win the same number of New Hampshire delegates with most of the vote tallied, with Klobuchar a few behind. Warren, Biden and the rest of the field were shut out, failing to reach the 15% threshold needed for delegates.

The AP allocated nine delegates each to Sanders and Buttigieg and six to Klobuchar.

The action was on the Democratic side, but Trump easily won New Hampshire’s Republican primary. He was facing token opposition from former Massachusetts Gov. Bill Weld.

With most of the vote in, Trump already had amassed more votes in the New Hampshire primary than any incumbent president in history. His vote share was approaching the modern historical high for an incumbent president, 86.43% set by Ronald Reagan in 1984. Weld received about 9% of the vote of New Hampshire Republicans.

The political spotlight quickly shifts to Nevada, where Democrats will hold caucuses on Feb. 22. But several candidates, including Warren and Sanders, plan to visit other states in the coming days that vote on Super Tuesday, signaling they are in the race for the long haul.

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Trial team quits Stone case over sentence dispute

By MICHAEL BALSAMO AND ERIC TUCKER

WASHINGTON — The four lawyers who prosecuted Roger Stone quit the case after the Justice Department overruled them and said it would take extraordinary step of lowering the amount of prison time it had recommended for the former Trump campaign adviser.

The departures on Tuesday raised immediate questions over whether Trump, who earlier in the day had blasted the original sentencing recommendation as “very horrible and unfair,” had at least indirectly exerted his will on a Justice Department that he often views as an arm of the White House.

The department insisted the decision to undo the sentencing recommendation was made Monday night — before Trump’s tweet — and prosecutors had not spoken to the White House about it. Even so, the departures of the entire trial team broke open a simmering dispute over the punishment of a Trump ally whose case has long captured the Republican president’s attention.

The four attorneys — Aaron Zeling, Adam Jed, who were early members of the special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia team, Michael Marando and Jonathan Kravis — comprised the entire Justice Department trial team that won convictions against Stone last fall. Each had signed onto a Monday sentencing memo that won convictions against Mueller’s team and that cut to the heart of his mission — to determine whether the Trump team had access to nonpublic information about Democratic emails hacked by Russian operatives and provided to WikiLeaks.

Trump was back on the attack late Tuesday, slamming the original sentencing recommendation and questioning the judge overseeing the Stone case. And by early Wednesday, he had tweeted a congratulations to Attorney General William Barr “for taking charge of a case that was totally out of control and perhaps should not have been brought,” suggesting the prosecutors had gone rogue.

It’s unclear what sentence the department will ultimately seek — the new sentencing memo issued Tuesday evening indicated that the original recommendation was too harsh but proposed no specific punishment of its own.

A Justice Department official said authorities decided to step in and seek a shorter sentence because they had been taken by surprise by the initial recommendation. The person, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said prosecutors had told the department to expect a recommendation for a shorter sentence.

The day of upheaval began with a morning tweet from Trump that the Stone case was a “miscarriage of justice.” He later told reporters he didn’t speak to Justice Department officials, though he said he had long hoped to take charge of a case that was once again threatened a Mis- sissippi dam where a dam previ- ously was in danger of failing.

The National Weather Service said minor to moderate flooding was expected from central Mississippi to north Georgia fol- lowing downpours. The Tennes- see River was predicted to crest at 7 feet above flood level at Perryville, Tenn., on Sunday.

Near Great Smoky Mountains National Park in eastern Ten- nessee, tons of rock and soil slid off a 70-foot hillside and blocked the northbound side of a U.S. 441 spur linking the tourist towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, the National Park Service said.

At least 45 dump truck loads will be required to clear the road, officials estimated, but no injuries were reported.

Multiple roads were covered with water or washed out because of rainfall that exceeded 5 inches in spots across central Alabama, and forecasters said totals could reach 6 inches by overnight.

Meteorologists were concerned about a Mississippi River that once again reached a critical level just weeks after heavy rains caused a mudslide that put the earthen dam in danger of failing.

Feds: Ex-convict extorted college students for nearly $1M

NEW YORK — An ex-convict accused of bilking several college students out of nearly $1 million and forcing some into prostitution or unpaid labor was arrested Tuesday on extortion and sex trafficking charges.

Lawrence “Larry” Ray was previously known for his role in helping to send former New York City police commissioner Bernard Kerik, who was a close con-fidant of Rudy Giuliani, to prison.

Ray allegedly ensnared many of his victims while they were sophomores at Sarah Lawrence College, a private liberal arts college outside New York City. He con- vinced them they were indebted to him, authorities said, subjecting them to “grueling interrogations” that spanned hours and deprived them of food and sleep.

Ray was taken into custody Tuesday. He has denied the alleg-ations, saying they were the re- sult of a conspiracy against him.

U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Ber- man told report- ers the investiga- tion was prompted by an article that appeared last year in New York magazine.

Ray’s lawyer, a private liberal arts college

Hill collapses, roads flooded, dam eroded by rain in South

Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A Ten- nessee hillside collapsed, roads were flooded and rivers were ris- ing across the Southeast on Tues- day after a day of heavy rains that once again threatened a Mis- sissippi lake where a dam previ- ously was in danger of failing.

The Mississippi River was predicted to crest at 7 feet above flood level at Perryville, Tenn., on Sunday.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park in eastern Ten- nessee, tons of rock and soil slid off a 70-foot hillside and blocked the northbound side of a U.S. 441 spur linking the tourist towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, the National Park Service said.

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Youth camping and fishing trips were cut short as rivers continued to rise and water levels were expected to continue to rise throughout the day.

The cause of the crash was under investigation.

In eastern Mississippi, officials in Starkville said the water at Ok- tibbeha County Lake had once again reached a critical level just weeks after heavy rains caused a mudslide that put the earthen dam in danger of failing.
Schools addresses Nazi flag seen in window

MD — Officials for a public school in Maryland are investigating after a Nazi flag was pictured hanging in a classroom window.

Witneses saw the flag while attending a basketball game at Governor Thomas Johnson High School in Frederick and photos of it quickly spread online, news outlets reported.

The Nazi flag was used in a War World II history class and left hanging in the window, visible to the outside, Frederick County Public Schools superintendent Theresa R. Alban said in a statement obtained by news outlets.

Alban said officials will “take appropriate action” to figure out what led up to the flag being hung there.

Man wins big lottery prize for a second time

NC — Lottery luck has smiled on a North Carolina man for the second time in seven years.

Donald Hildebran won $250,000 after buying four 20X The Cash scratch-off tickets at a convenience store in Morganton, North Carolina Education Lottery said in a news release.

It wasn’t the first time Hildebran has hit it big in the lottery. In 2013, he won $200,000 in the Extreme Cash game.

Hildebran, a retiree from Connelly Springs, told lottery officials he spent some of his first prize on a beach trip and plans to do the same with his new prize.

“I’m going fishing,” he told lottery officials. “I’m going to the beach!”

Woman accused of stalking former boss

FL — A 45-year-old Florida woman is accused of stalking and harassing her former boss in an effort to get her job back, police said.

Brygida Trzaska was arrested on charges of harassing phone calls and stalking, West Palm Beach police said.

After being fired in February 2019 following a dispute over vacation time and sick leave, Trzaska called the victim 339 times after sending emails and even waited outside the victim’s house for a chance to speak to her, the Palm Beach Post reported.

Police said the victim received several emails from Trzaska between February and June, wanting to address the termination.

Investigators found that Trzaska called the victim 339 times between Dec. 14 and Jan. 28.

Massive firework shot breaks world record

CO — A massive firework launched over a Colorado ski resort town has set a record for the world’s largest aerial firework.

The 2,800-pound shell flew 2,200 feet above the Steamboat Springs Winter Carnival before it burst, turning the sky bright red and drawing gasps from the crowd, The Steamboat Pilot & Today reported.

Tim Borden of Steamboat Springs headed the team that developed the firework over seven years. Borden first attempted to set the world record last year, but failed when the shell exploded inside the mortar, the newspaper reported.

Neighbors try to stop mauling by pack of dogs

FL — Neighbors used sticks, pieces of a gutter and a lawn chair in an attempt to stop a pack of dogs from mauling a Florida woman, who was critically injured in the attack that lasted at least five minutes, authorities said.

The attack only stopped when neighbors saw them through a sliding glass door that wasn’t prop- erly closed, authorities said.

The woman, who wasn’t identified, was in critical condition at a hospital.

The woman was in her backyard with her small dog when four or five dogs in a neighboring house saw them through a sliding glass door that wasn’t properly closed, authorities said. The neighbor’s dogs escaped from the house and attacked them.

THE CENSUS

$80K

The worth of Rolex watches stolen by two men

Conneticut police are looking for. Stamford Police Capt. Richard Conklin said the two men broke into a Lord & Taylor store Thursday, began smashing a glass-topped case of high-end watches and took eight to 10 of the luxury brand watches before fleeing.

“It looks like the two parties involved entered the store earlier, probably in an effort to case the location, about an hour and one-half prior to this action they took,” Conklin said.

K9 finds 220 pounds of pot in 2 traffic stops

MO — COLUMBIA — The Missouri State Highway Patrol asked “Who’s a good boy?” in a tweet after one of its dogs sniffed out about 220 pounds of marijuana during two Interstate 70 traffic stops.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported that Romy’s expert nose landed a Georgia man and two people from Virginia behind bars after they were caught with the drugs while traveling through Cooper County in central Missouri.

Rancher pleads guilty to poisoning 6 bald eagles

ND — BISMARCK — A South Dakota rancher has pleaded guilty to federal charg- es in the deaths of six protected bald eagles that may have been triggered by heavy rain.

Removal of mud and debris from the slide began on U.S. Highway 19/74 in the Nantahala Gorge, the North Carolina Dep-artment of Transportation said in a news release.

The location of the cleanup was near Hewitts Road, which NC DOT said was a “troublesome location” that closed the highway a month ago because of a landslide.

The area experienced exces- sive rain and flooded streams leading to road closures, news outlets reported.

3 charged with theft from youth program

TN — Three people have been charged with stealing $30,000 from a youth clay target shooting program in Tennessee, authorities said.

Tennessee Bureau of Investi- gation agents began investigat- ing theft of money from the 4-H Scholastic Clay Target Program in Monroe County in December 2015, the state police agency said in a news release.

During the investigation, agents found that Mary Ellen Sellin, Timothy Scott Sellin, and Tony Aram Millsaps stole about $30,000 from the program over several years, the TBI said.

Mary Ellen Sellin handled funds for the organization, while Timothy Sellin and Millsaps served as coaches for the program, the TBI said.

All three turned themselves in to authorities on the theft charges this week.

From wire reports
Teachers unions: Active shooter drills scare kids

By PAT EATON-ROBB
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — The nation’s two largest teachers unions want schools to revise or eliminate active shooter drills, asserting Tuesday that they can harm students’ mental health and that there are better ways to prepare for the possibility of a school shooting.

The American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association joined with the advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund in calling for an end to unannounced drills or drills that simulate gun violence.

“When I travel, I hear from parents and educators about active shooter drills terrifying students, leaving them unable to concentrate in the classroom and unable to sleep at night,” said Lily Eckels Garcia, president of the National Education Association.

“So traumatizing students as we work to keep students safe from gun violence is not the answer. That is why if schools are going to do drills, they need to be steps to ensure the drills do more good than harm.”

The report released Tuesday recommended that schools concentrate on training teachers to respond to an active shooter incident rather than drilling students.

It also issued guidelines for schools that decide to use drills. Those include giving parents, educators and students advance notice of any drill, working with mental health officials to create age-appropriate and trauma-informed drills, never simulating an actual shooting and tracking the effects of drills.

About 98% of schools drilled students on lockdown procedures in the 2015-16 school year, according to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics.

“In Indiana, they were shooting teachers with rubber pellets so they would feel the adrenaline of what a school shooting would feel like,” said Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action, which is part of Everytown.

“In California recently, a superintendent hired a stranger to wear a mask to rattle the doors of classrooms without letting faculty and students know. We’ve seen students asked to pretend to be victims and lie down using fake blood in the hallway.”

Jean-Paul Guilbault, the chief executive of the Alice Training Institute, which runs active shooter response training exercises at Fountain Middle School in Fountain, Colo.

Students are led out of school as members of the Fountain Police Department take part in an Active Shooter Response Training exercise at Fountain Middle School in Fountain, Colo.

Actor Jussie Smollett faces 6 new charges in Chicago

By PAT EATON-ROBB
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Actor Jussie Smollett faces six new charges in Chicago on Thursday, the latest in a yearlong saga that started when theEmpire star said he was attacked in downtown Chicago, surrounded Smollett a year ago.

The indictment came from a special prosecutor who was appointed last March. Those include giving parents, educators and students advance notice of any drill, working with mental health officials to create age-appropriate and trauma-informed drills, never simulating an actual shooting and tracking the effects of drills.

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By MARK SCOLFORO
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A Pennsyl
via court this week will con
sider a legal challenge by three
transgender women to a two-de
cade-old state law that prohibits
people who have committed seri
ous felonies from ever changing
their names.

Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court will
hear oral arguments Thursday in
the lawsuit brought by plaintiffs
who live as women but are unable
to change their masculine first
names because of a 1990 state law
designed to prevent fraud.

Pennsylvania law requires any felon to wait at least two years after completion of their sentence to apply for a name change, and those convicted of certain more serious felonies are permanently barred from doing so.

“People have a fundamental
right to control their own names,
and that can’t be overridden by a
legal presumption that felons are
engaging in fraud when they seek
a name change,” the women’s
lawyers wrote in a court filing in
May. Those who may not change
their names are forced “to speak
and write an undesired name in
order to travel, vote, pay taxes or
simply conduct their daily lives,”
they argued.

The state attorney general’s of
ice said that the law was meant
to enhance public safety and wel
fare and argued there is no fund
amental right to a name change in
the state constitution.

State Attorney General Josh Shapiro issued a statement Tuesday that his office has a re
sponsibility to defend the consti
tutionality of Pennsylvania laws, “despite my personal opinion.”

In a filing seeking dismissal, the attorney general’s office argued that “the restrictions are rati
onally related to the valid concern that people with serious felony convictions may seek to assume a new identity in order to avoid detection and escape the conse
quences of their convictions.”

The lawsuit does not seek to
overturn the law entirely, only the provision banning those from going to court to show that their name change is not designed for fraudulent purposes.

After oral arguments in Pitts
burgh on Thursday, the Common
wealth Court panel could rule for either side or determine that a hearing is needed to present evidence.

Transgender felons seek to case state name change laws
Radical Shi’ite cleric threatens to reject Iraqi PM designate

**Associated Press**

BAGHDAD — An influential Shi’ite preacher who heads a powerful political bloc in Iraq’s Parliament threatened Tuesday to withdraw support for the candidate chosen by rival blocs as prime minister-designate, indicating that the formation of a new government was facing challenges.

Muqtada al-Sadr, who heads the Sairoon bloc that garnered the most seats in parliament following the May 2018 election, said in a statement posted on social media that he was losing support. He threatened to withdraw his candidate Mohammed Allawi to succeed Abdul-Mahdi, like his predecessor, Adel Abdul-Mahdi, was a compromise candidate of rival blocs Sairoon and Fatah, which includes leaders associated with the paramilitary Popular Mobilization Units headed by Hadi al-Amiri.

In the May 2018 election, neither coalition won a commanding plurality that would have enabled it to name the premier, as stipulated by the Iraqi constitution. To avoid political crisis, Sairoon and Fatah forged a precarious union with Abdul-Mahdi as their prime minister. On Feb. 1, they chose Allawi to succeed Abdul-Mahdi, after he resigned under pressure from protests in December. Allawi has 30 days to formulate a government program and name Cabinet ministers.

Pope avoids the question of married priests in Amazon

**BY NICOLE WINFIELD**

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis declined Wednesday to approve the ordination of married men to address a shortage of priests in the Amazon, sidestepping a fraught issue that has dominated debate in the Catholic Church and even involved retired Pope Benedict XVI.

Francis did not refer to the recommendations by Amazonian bishops to consider the ordination of married men or female deacons. Rather, the pope urged bishops to pray for more priestly vocations and to send missionar­ies to a region where Catholics in remote areas can go months or even years without Mass.

The papal dodge disappointed progressives, who had hoped he would, at the very least, put both questions to further study. Liberal Catholic women’s groups were also outraged. Meanwhile, the news was a relief to conservatives, who had hoped he would, at the very least, put both questions to further study. Liberal Catholic women’s groups were also outraged. Meanwhile, the news was a relief to conservatives, who had hoped he would, at the very least, put both questions to further study. Liberals, who want more say and roles in church governance and ministry, but the group ended its work without reaching a consensus.

Groups that advocate for women’s ordination and giving women greater roles in the Catholic Church blasted the document. Francis justified his refusal to consider ordained ministry for women as sparing them the risk of being “clericalized,” or placed on a pedestal.

“This is a dereliction of his duty as a leader with the power to make positive change and challenge discrimination,” said Miriam Duignan of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, a British-based progressive Catholic think tank.

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Victoria Pedretti doesn’t scare quite so easily anymore.

At least, not since she’s become TV’s favorite new horror queen, a sort of “Jamie Lee Curtis, millennial edition.”

Fans of the acclaimed Netflix series “The Haunting of Hill House” know Pedretti from her breakout performance as the warm and sympathetic twin Nell Crain. She nabbed that role just seconds after graduating from Carnegie Mellon University in 2017, and her success has led to two more roles: She returns to that series for its second season (called “Haunting of Bly Manor,” an all-new spoof first out this year in which she plays a completely different character); and she stars in the second season of “You,” another Netflix hit, playing the object of Penn Badgley’s affection. Unfortunately, he’s a sweet but obsessive serial killer and in the show’s first season, well, things didn’t work out so well for his lady friend.

Pedretti, 24, who grew up in and around Philadelphia, also recently appeared as a murderous Manson hippie in Quentin Tarantino’s “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood.” She recently spoke by phone with Newsday contributor Joseph V. Amodio from Vancouver, British Columbia, on a break from shooting “Bly Manor.”

Pedretti: Seemingly. He’s definitely drawn to women who seem to have their own goals and ambitions. Which is a good quality, I guess.

Sure, aside from the pesky psychopath thing.

Pedretti: Right.

How are your own skills in the kitchen? Are you much of a chef?

Definitely. I love to cook. I spent a lot of time in high school cooking instead of doing my homework.

What’s your go-to dish?

I think pasta tends to warm people’s hearts, you know. I put a lot of love into making pasta. But I like to try new things, too.

You’re getting to be an old pro when it comes to horror stories and thrillers. Do you like to watch those kinds of tales?

Not really. Most of my life I’ve avoided that. I find life scary enough. I’m an actor. (She laughs.) I’m already really sensitive, I’ve gotta admit.

I’m partial to the classics, like “The Shining” and “Poltergeist.” And I have a special place in my heart for “The Amityville Horror” because my grandparents actually lived in Amityville.

Oh, wow! That’s so cool. So much of my experience with horror growing up was with kids trying to get everybody to go to the basement to watch a movie to see who could handle it the most.

Like a slasher pic?

Yeah. Those movies are all jump-scares. They mean a lot to some people, but it’s never been my cup of tea. But I’m figuring it out. I’ve begun to see how horror isn’t so different from a lot of the things you experience in a regular drama. And I’m appreciating the fact that these horror stories we tell relate to the folklore with which we’ve explained the world for so long. Monsters and ghosts and ghouls — societies have always been wrestling with the idea of death and what it means to die. So I’ve been watching a lot of horror, actually, to see how it’s constructed.

What was it like working with “Gossip Girl” heartthrob Penn Badgley?

OH MY GOD! I miss him. He’s the most lovely, creative, exuberant, intelligent man. He’s really a great person to work with. A great collaborator and friend. I’m so excited for everybody to see the amazing work he’s done this season.

Did he sort of welcome you to “You”?

Honestly, he was kind of on his lonesome, being one of the only people left from the first season. We shot in an entirely different place with an entirely different crew. And almost the entire cast was different. I feel a lot like him now on this second season of “Haunting,” being one of the only people from the first season. It’s interesting to go into another season of a show with such a different vibe. There’s a lot of readjusting to do.

Victoria Pedretti is a rising star in TV horror, with roles in the second seasons of “You” and “The Haunting of Hill House.”

Universal reverses course, plans to release ‘The Hunt’ film in March

Universal Pictures reversed an earlier decision to cancel the release of “The Hunt,” a film about the rich elite killing conservatives that ignited a firestorm of controversy last year.

The film from Blumhouse Productions opens March 13, the studio division of Comcast Corp. said in a statement Tuesday. Plans to release the satirical horror film were shelved in August following mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, and a backlash against the liberals-hunting-conservatives storyline.

The most talked about movie of the year is one that no one’s actually seen, “the producers say in a new poster for the film. “Decide for yourself.”

In a series of tweets around the time “The Hunt” was pulled, President Donald Trump criticized the “racist” liberal Hollywood elite for creating a movie “made in order to inflame and cause chaos.”

“The Hunt” follows 12 strangers who wake up in a forest clear and realize they are being targeted for sport by rich elites, including a wealthy woman played by Hilary Swank. Two allegedly leaked lines of the script describe a character “going out to the manor and slaughtering a dozen deplorables.”

“Deplorables” was used by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in her last election to describe some Trump supporters, and the leaked dialogue inflamed some online chat groups.

A description of the movie released by Universal and early trailers suggest the rich elite are the antagonists in the film. The heroine appears to be a woman who is captured and fights back.

Since last year, the film’s website has carried only a statement explaining the decision to pull the picture. “After thoughtful consideration, the studio has decided to cancel our plans to release the film. We stand by our filmmakers and will continue to distribute films in partnership with bold and visionary creators, like those associated with this satirical social thriller.”

Rap imposters accused of scamming hotels

A crew of Rolls Royce-riding identity thieves who posed as rap industry figures scammed more than $100,000 from some of the South’s most exclusive hotels, prosecutors say.

The group told hotel workers they were with the entertainment firm Roc Nation, and listed the rap group Wu-Tang Clan with at least one of the hotels, according to a criminal complaint filed this week in U.S. District Court in Atlanta. Walker Washington and Aaron Barnes-Burpo are charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Credit cards used in the scam included one that was stolen, and another that was likely fake, the complaint states.

From wire reports


**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**

1. Pedestal
2. Flow out
3. Duell tool
4. 12. Temporary calm
5. 13. Take to court
6. 14. Minus
7. 15. Spoken
8. 16. Stick with a kick
9. 17. Golf hazard
10. 18. Ritzy appetizer
11. 20. James Clavell novel
12. 22. Discoverer's call
13. 23. Spanish gold
14. 24. Beer ingredient
15. 27. Venetian vessels
16. 28. LAX info
17. 33. Zsa Zsa's sister
18. 34. Big fuss
19. 35. Layered pasta entrees
20. 38. Answer an invite
21. 39. Historic period
22. 40. TV schedule abbr.
23. 42. Tastelessly showy
24. 45. Des Moines natives
25. 49. PTA and NEA, e.g.
26. 50. Tennis feat
27. 52. Panache
28. 53. Chills and fever
29. 54. Apr. addresssee
30. 55. Asian desert
31. 56. Oddes
32. 57. Parcel of land
33. 58. Sudden wind
34. 28. Eggs
35. 29. Most spiteful
36. 30. Adj. modifier
37. 31. Soak (up)
38. 26. Sci-fi zapper
39. 24. Actor Gibson
40. 25. One-time link
41. 21. Mortar carrier
42. 19. "I see"

**ACROSS**

**DOWN**

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

**CRYPTOQUIP**

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RBWDQSA UMFISR KUNIX
CEMUNFEUNC CEW GUXQWR
UK GWSNCQKNA ZOCEQDAS
ZSQXWIR: IOZBE IUWXR.
Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: THAT GUY MADE A FORTUNE BY RUNNING A COMPANY THAT PRODUCES BEEF BROTH. HE’S A BOUILLON-AIRE.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: U equals O
```
Trump broke no laws when he fired Yovanovitch

BY JONATHAN TURLEY
Special to The Washington Post

J ust because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t after you. Some buy this claim from the fictional Capt. John Yossarian in Joseph Heller’s satiric novel “Catch-22” could well have come from President Donald Trump last Thursday. He fired the acting US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, after two impeachment witnesses and a third man, the twin brother of one of the witnesses, were unanimously held to be “pure retaliation,” and has led to calls for criminal and oversight investigations. Yet, while it is true that President Donald Trump clearly wanted to fire them to send a message — a message visibly conveyed by his call to a Ukrainian official that Yovanovitch, a staunch ally of the US president, had been unceremoniously ousted from the White House. Moreover, the removal of Yovanovitch’s twin brother, David, was a thinly veiled threat of medieval blood-revenge punishment. The replacement of these officials, however, was not unethical or unprecedented. Presidents have also hired officials for what they viewed as insubordination or opposition to their policies. President Harry Truman fired the hugely popular Gen. Douglas MacArthur in the middle of the Korean War. President Barack Obama forced out Adm. Dennis Blair, who was at the time director of national intelligence, after he opposed the president’s view on drone strikes. Obama also sacked International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal because there had been open criticism of the president in a Rolling Stone story. Trump fired national security adviser Michael Flynn when it was disclosed that he shared sensitive information without authorization.

“T he writing was on the wall even before the New Hampshire votes came in Tuesday night. Another promising Joe Biden presidential campaign is falling flat. The Irish pride and once, again, the orchestra’s playing “Nearer My God To Thee.”

Is anyone surprised, really? The Democrats talking for the past year about Biden’s eligibility and his front-runner status have reminded me of growing-ups discussing Santa Claus. Children believed in it, the children they knew the illusion wouldn’t last forever, but nobody wanted to be the one to spoil it. There is something about this tumbling golden retriever of a politician — so friendly, so steadfast, so eager to please — that doesn’t click on the presidential level. Three times he’s tried, but despite his public service, despite his ease on the stump, despite his bottomless reservoir of anecdotes (some true, some not) and aphorisms (some apt, some baffling), he never won a ticket out of Iowa. There’s no shame in that. The United States has about 336 million people in it, and only one wins the presidency — every four years. Powell’s a circus act, there to entertain. No one expects him to play quarterback in a Super Bowl.

The apparent end of another Biden presidential bid marks not just the passing of a persona, but a belief, a concept. It is the end of the white ethnic pol. Though Biden is no Kennedy or Dole, he bears many of the identifying traits of a classic Irish American on the hustings. The there’s the blarney, sure, and the heart on the sleeve, but also the pragmatism, the idea that fistfights in the afternoon will be followed by a beer together in the pub; the principle that I’ll get mine and you’ll get yours and we’ll make do so long as mine’s a bit more than yours.

Irish-machine politics built New York, Boston, Chicago, Kansas City — the list goes on and on. A kind of apothecary was reached in the early 1980s, when Repub- lican Ronald Reagan was in the White House. His “Tip” O’Neill ran Congress, two sons of the Old Sod who could never be mistaken for the same Irishman. It is a man, the twin brother of one of the wit- nesses (some true, some not) and aphorisms (some apt, some baffling), he never won a ticket out of Iowa. There’s no shame in that. The United States has about 336 million people in it, and only one wins the presidency — every four years. Powell’s a circus act, there to entertain. No one expects him to play quarterback in a Super Bowl.

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Ben Johnson said in a statement to the Associated Press. "There have been all activities involving the football program. We will share more information when available."

Riep is a 6-foot-1, 185-pound cornerback entering his senior season for Ohio State's top-5 football program, but while Wint is a 6-foot-1, 198-pound redshirt senior safety, according to court documents.  

Sources: Spartans hire Buffalo's Tucker

By Larry Lage

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Mel Tucker has agreed to lead Michi- gan State, according to two people familiar with the decision.

Tucker replaces Dwayneued Enos, who stepped down this week according to two people familiar with the decision.

One person said the school's governing board sched- uled a meet- ing later in the day to approve the hiring of Tucker.

Michigan State athletic director Sandy Barbour said she is pleased to have someone with "an unbelievable amount of enthusiasm and positive energy."  

Tucker was a successful assistant coach under Saban at Alabama in 2015. He spent only one season with the Crimson Tide, helping him win a national title, before the Bull- dogs hired him away. He also was the interim head coach for Jack- sonville in 2011. 

Tucker was also an assistant coach at Ohio State as a defensive backs coach when it won a national title and Saban against a graduate assistant at the University of Alabama.  

According to a five-year, $14.75 million contract to lead the Buckeyes, with 

Tucker became a head coach under Saban in 2007.

"I've known Mel for well over 20 years and he is one of the brightest coaches in our profes- sional ranks. He is a guy who knows college football and how to win," said Duckett, who is currently an assistant coach under Saban at Alabama.  

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PITTSBURGH — The puck ended up on Yanni Gourde’s stick and for a split second, the only thing the Tampa Bay Lightning forward felt was a sense of panic.

It passed. It always does these days for the NHL’s hottest team. Gourde collected Brayden Point’s cross-ice feed and ripped a shot to the short side over the right arm of Pittsburgh goaltender Matt Murray to give the Lightning a 2-1 overtime victory Tuesday night. The win was Tampa Bay’s eighth straight and 20th in its last 23 games and came at the end of a draining back-to-back to start with an emotional overtime triumph in Columbus on Monday.

 Barely 24 hours later, the Lightning found a way again despite playing the third period and the extra session without leading scorer Nikita Kucherov, who left late in the second with a lower-body injury. Still, Tampa Bay kept right on rolling when Gourde found the back of the net 2:45 into OT for his seventh of the season and first since Nov. 23. Gourde admitted he thought about going over Murray’s glove parry during the shot but sensed an opening up high.

The Lightning’s 38th and last shot ended with the goal lamp blinking red as Gourde’s team-mates stood up and turned over the boards in celebration.

“It was a huge team effort and it really felt great to score that goal at the end there, finally,” Gourde said.

Mikhail Sergachev scored his ninth goal and Andrei Vasilevsky chopped 35 shots for Tampa Bay, which drew within one point of Atlantic Division leader Boston for the best record in the NHL.

“That was definitely a mosh pit tonight,” Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. “It’s an aching league to win in, especially against a team as talented as that. But that was one of the guttier ones I’ve seen.”

Evgeni Malkin got his 18th goal for the Penguins and Durren Helm finished with 36 saves but didn’t get his right arm high enough fast enough to get a piece of Gourde’s winner. The Penguins fell to 4-1 since returning from the All-Star break. Sam Montembeault won for only the second time (2-1-2) since returning from the All-Star break.

Vasilevskiy with Mitchell Stephens, right, defending during the Lightning’s 2-1 overtime win Tuesday.

The Penguins, who have been searching for a replacement for injured All-Star forward Jake Guentzel, moved aggressively to land Zucker. Pittsburgh sent forwards Alex Galchenyuk, defensive prospect Calen Addison and a conditional 2023 first-round draft pick to the Wild in exchange for Zucker, a proven two-way player who can do a little bit of everything.

The Pens didn’t exactly give Zucker time to get settled. In the span of a day he went from playing on the fourth line on a team with fading postseason hopes to serving on the top line with Sidney Crosby for a franchise where reaching the playoffs has been given for well over a decade.

Zucker called his rushed move from Minnesota to Pittsburgh “surreal” and acknowledged it was “biarzce” to pull on Penguins’ black and yellow after spending his entire career with the Wild. While his new teammates praised Zucker’s skill and speed, Zucker believes he wasn’t particularly sharp in his debut.

“I don’t think I played very well tonight,” he said. “My hands were terrible. I pretty much mishandled every puck.”

Panthers down Devils, stop 3-game skid

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Florida’s fourth line of Mike Matheson, Mark Pysyk and Joel Eriksson Ek each scored and accounted for eight points Tuesday as the Panthers snapped a three-game losing streak with a 5-3 defeat of the New Jersey Devils.

Frank Vatrano and Brett Connolly also scored as the Panthers won for only the second time (2-2-0) since returning from the All-Star break. Sam Montembeault won for only the second time (2-1-2) since returning from the All-Star break.

Frank Vatrano and Brett Connolly scored for the Coyotes.

Carter Hutton stopped 27 shots, and Buffalo won for just the third time (3-3-0) since returning from the All-Star break.

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Zach Hyman had two goals in Tuesday’s game.

The Red Wings’ Darren Helm scored twice and host Edmonton won a 2-1 overtime victory.

Ryan Strome and Mika Zibanejad each had a goal and assist for the Rangers.

Nikolaj Ehlers had Winnipeg’s lone goal. The loss also ended the Jets’ five-game point streak (4-0-1).

Wild 4, Golden Knights 0: Kevin Fiala had a goal and two assists, and host Minnesota matched its season high with three power-play goals on the way to a win over Vegas.

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Josh Bailey, Jordan Eberle and Leo Komarov each had a goal and an assist, and Matt Martin also scored as the Islanders win their fifth straight (5-1-2). Mathew Barzal had three assists.

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Blues’ Bouwmeester has cardiac incident, teams postpone game

BY JOE REEDY
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — St. Louis defenseman Jay Bouwmeester was hospitalized and undergoing tests early Wednesday after suffering a cardiac episode and collapsing on the bench during the first period of the Blues’ game against the Ducks.

The team said in a statement late Tuesday night that the 36-year-old Bouwmeester was conscious and alert. Blues general manager Doug Armstrong said Bouwmeester was awake, alert and moving his arms and legs as he was transported from the arena.

The teams postponed the rest of Tuesday’s game, to be made up at a later date.

The Blues were supposed to fly to Las Vegas, where they are scheduled to play Thursday, but remained in Southern California overnight.

“Thankfully, with the quick response of our medical trainers, Anaheim medical trainers and their team physicians, they were able to stabilize Jay,” Armstrong said.

The hockey community sent tweets of support as word of the episode spread throughout the NHL. Washington Capitals forward T.J. Oshie wrote “Praying for Bo!” while teams around the league sent out best wishes.

Teammates Vince Dunn and Alex Pietrangelo immediately called for help after Bouwmeester slumped over with 7:50 left in the first period. After a couple of minutes, Bouwmeester was taken out on a stretcher through a tunnel next to the Blues bench and transported to an Orange County hospital.

Bouwmeester appeared to be grabbing a drink of water when he began to slowly fall. Emergency medical personnel rushed to the Blues bench. Bouwmeester was skating in his 57th game this season and the 1,241st of his NHL career. He skated 1:20 in his last shift before collapsing and logged 5:34 of ice time in the game.

St. Louis’ radio announcer Chris Kerber said during an interview with the team’s flagship station that a defibrillator was used.

Bouwmeester’s father was at the game as part of the team’s annual Dads Trip. He went with his son to the hospital while teammates and their fathers remained at the arena awaiting updates.

Ducks and Blues players gathered to see what was wrong before Bouwmeester was taken away. The teams then went to their dressing rooms, and the game was called off a few minutes later tied at 1.

Players from both teams met for hugs and well-wishes after changing out of their gear.

The last player to collapse on an NHL bench was Dallas forward Rich Peverley in 2014. Peverley had an irregular heartbeat, and the quick response of emergency officials made sure he was OK.

The NHL has pages of emergency medical standards that spell out in specific detail that at least two doctors must be in attendance for every game and one must be within 50 feet of the bench. A defibrillator, which was used when Detroit’s Jiri Fischer collapsed in 2005, must be available, along with a triage room and ambulances.

Bouwmeester is in his 17th NHL season and has for that time been known for his strong skating and conditioning. He helped the Blues win the Stanley Cup last season and won an Olympic gold medal with Canada in 2014.

Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden scored 42 points, Russell Westbrook had 36 and the Houston Rockets whooped Boston’s seven-game win streak with a 116-105 victory over the Celtics on Tuesday night.

Houston broke it open with a 15-2 run that made it 116-98 with about two minutes left. Harden scored six points during the decisive stretch, and Daniel House had five.

Boston had two turnarounds and missed numerous shots to allow the Rockets to turn the close game into one where coach Mike D’Antoni cleared the bench for the last minute with the game well in hand.

Harden had eight rebounds and seven assists, and Westbrook finished with 10 rebounds and five assists.

“Harden was great ... and West- brook was great,” Boston coach Brad Stevens said. “Those guys are two of the best in the world and they showed it again tonight.”

Howard Hayward had 20 points in the Celtics’ first loss since Jan. 26.

NBA roundup

Rockets end Celtics’ streak as Harden scores 42 points

HOUSTON — James Harden scored 42 points, Russell West- brook had 36 and the Houston Rockets whooped Boston’s seven-game win streak with a 116-105 victory over the Celtics on Tuesday night.

Boston broke it open with a 15-2 run that made it 116-98 with about two minutes left. Harden scored six points during the decisive stretch, and Daniel House had five.

Boston had two turnarounds and missed numerous shots to allow the Rockets to turn the close game into one where coach Mike D’Antoni cleared the bench for the last minute with the game well in hand.

Harden had eight rebounds and seven assists, and Westbrook finished with 10 rebounds and five assists.

“Harden was great ... and West- brook was great,” Boston coach Brad Stevens said. “Those guys are two of the best in the world and they showed it again tonight.”

Howard Hayward had 20 points in the Celtics’ first loss since Jan. 26.

76ers 110, Clippers 103: Ben Simmons had 26 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, pushing the host Sixers to the win.

Joel Embiid also scored 26 points and Tobias Harris added 17 points and 12 boards for Phila- delphia, which has the NBA’s best home record at 25-2. Josh Richar- dson scored 17 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter.

Kawhi Leonard led Los Angeles with 30 points, and reserve Landry Shamet scored 19 against his former team.

Richardson nailed his third three-pointer of the quarter to give the Sixers a 102-94 lead with 4:44 left. Then he scored on a driving left-handed layup and made the free throw to complete the three-point play, extending the lead to 11.

Pelicans 128, Trail Blazers 117: Zion Williamson scored a season-high 31 points, powering host New Orleans to the victory.

Playing 26 minutes in just his ninth NBA game, William- son used his 6-foot-6, 285-pound frame, quick feet and explosive vertical to have his way with every defender Portland tried against him.

J.J. Redick scored 20 and Josh Hart had 17 points for the Pelicans, who trail by as many as 16 in the first quarter before taking command en route to a three- straight victory.

Trail Blazers star Damian Lil- lard scored 20 points — less than half of his 42-point average in his previous 10 games.

Wizards 126, Bulls 114: Bradley Beal scored 30 points, and host Washington held off Zach LaVine and Chicago for the victory.

Rui Hachimura added 20 points for the Wizards, who won for the fourth time in six games.

LaVine scored 19 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter as the Bulls whittled an 18-point deficit down to six with 1.9 seconds left.

Spurs 118, Thunder 106: LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and 14 rebounds, and Anto- nio won at Oklahoma City to stop a five-game slide.

DeJounte Murray also scored 25 points for the Spurs, who had dropped eight of 10 overall. Patty Mills had 20 points, and fellow reserve Derrick White finished with 17. Led by Aldridge and Murray, San Antonio made 25 of 37 foul shots.

NBA scoreboard

Houston Rockets guard James Harden, right, drives past Boston Celtics guard Kemba Walker. Harden had 42 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to lead his team to a 116-105 win Tuesday in Houston.
Unbeatable Aztecs win Mountain West title

San Diego State improves to 25-0 with its wallowing of New Mexico

Associated Press

San DIEGO — San Diego State Aztecs won the Mountain West Conference championship after being showered with confetti, cut down a net at Viejas Arena, doused coach Brian Dutcher with Gatorade and then reset their goals.

Just keep winning.

Junior forward Matt Mitchell had 22 points and 12 rebounds for his first career double-double and scored his 1,000th point for No. 4 San Diego State, which beat New Mexico 82-59 Tuesday night to win the MWC title and remain the nation’s only undefeated team at 25-0.

“The hardest thing in basketball, obviously other than winning a Final Four, is winning a regular-season conference title, because you have to do it over the whole season,” Dutcher said. “To have the title outright already with four games to play is an incredible accomplishment.

“I told them in the locker room, now we have to get greedy,” said Dutcher, who has won a Final Four, as Steve Fisher’s assistant at Michigan in 1989. “We’ve got to try to win them all. It won’t be easy. Four really hard games to go, but now that we have the title, we have to have another goal, and that goal has to be to have a perfect season. That will be the next step, to try to finish with a perfect season.”

Yanni Wetzell added 20 points and nine rebounds for the Aztecs (25-0, 14-0 MWC), who clinched a share of the league title and a top seed in the tournament. Jordan Schakel scored 11 for SDSU.

“San Diego State forward Matt Mitchell, right, dunks over New Mexico guard Keith McGee. Mitchell had 22 points and 12 rebounds in the No. 4 Aztecs’ 82-59 defeat of New Mexico on Tuesday in San Diego. By the numbers

1,000
San Diego State junior forward Matt Mitchell had 22 points to reach 1,000 points for his career, surpassing Kawhi Leonard for the school’s all-time scoring record.

.387
Three-point shooting percentage for the Aztecs, tops in the Mountain West Conference.

17.6
Average number of points by which San Diego State has outscored opponents this season, behind only Gonzaga’s margin of 21.6.

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Browns defensive end Myles Garrett, right, hits Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph with a helmet during a game on Nov. 14, 2019. Garrett was suspended indefinitely after the incident, but he was reinstated by the league on Wednesday.

Browns’ Garrett reinstated by NFL

By Tom Withers
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Myles Garrett is allowed to play and chase quarterbacks again after the NFL reinstated the Browns’ star defensive end from his indefinite suspension for a vicious attack on Pittsburgh QB Mason Rudolph last season.

The league lifted its ban Wednesday on Garrett, who ripped off Rudolph’s helmet and smashed him over the head with it during a Nov. 14 game on national television. Garrett missed Cleveland’s final six games and his loss was a major blow to the Browns, who went 2-4 without him, finished 6-10, fired coach Freddie Kitchens and saw general manager John Dorsey resign.

On Monday, Garrett met with Commissioner Roger Goodell and other league officials in the final step before he was cleared to return. He can participate in all of the Browns’ offseason activities and that’s a big relief as the team is undergoing another new start under coach Kevin Stefanski.

Garrett is cleared to return to all activities with the Browns.

“We welcome Myles back to our organization with open arms,” Browns vice president of football operations and GM Andrew Berry said. “We know he is grateful to be reinstated, eager to put the past behind him and continue to evolve and grow as a leader. We look forward to having his strong positive presence back as a teammate, player and person in our community.”

Garrett did not release a statement, but he posted a meme on his Twitter account of a scene from the film “John Wick” with the subtitle: “But now yeah, I’m THINKING I’M BACK!!!”

Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield offered his support, tweeting: “welcome back big fellas!!!”

As the Browns were wrapping up a rare win over the Steelers in a Thursday night matchup, Garrett, the No. 1 overall draft pick in 2017, pulled down Rudolph after a pass attempt and the two wrestled on the ground. Rudolph tried to pull off Garrett’s helmet but couldn’t. Garrett ripped off Rudolph’s helmet and swung and punched him with it, triggering a brawl between the teams.

Garrett paid dearly for his misstep. He was fined $45,623 and lost $1.14 million in game checks. His reputation also took a shot and he’ll have to watch his behavior going forward as another violent incident could result in even harsher discipline by the league.

Garrett’s suspension is the longest for a single game incident in league history. Tennessee’s Albert Haynesworth was suspended five games for stomping on a player’s helmet-less head in 2006.

Garrett appealed his ban and told independent officer James Thrash during his hearing that Rudolph had used a slur during their skirmish. However Thrash upheld the decision and Garrett was done for the season.

The league also suspended Steelers guard Maurkice Pouncey for three games (the penalty was later reduced to two) for punching and kicking Garrett, and Browns defensive lineman Larry Ogunjobi was suspended one game.

The next step is to see what the NCAA is capable of presenting to us in April.

Sen. Jerry Moran
Kansas Republican

“The power conferences have advantages and they will hold their advantage in said ‘grandrails’ on athlete pay.”

Sen. Jerry Moran, a Kansas Republican and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection, said he was not inclined to act until after the NCAA reveals its new rules.

“I wish Congress was in a position to be able to provide the NCAA and the athletes the opportunity to figure out the ability for Congress to do that is, that’s a challenge,” Moran said in an interview after the hearing. “The next step is to see what the NCAA is capable of presenting to us in April.”

NCAA critics believe there is plenty of evidence that recruiting is already corrupt — pointing in part to the federal criminal case involving shoe companies paying basketball players to attend schools they sponsor — and that letting players earn endorsement money won’t create the major problems the NCAA predicts.

Ramogi Huma, executive director of the National College Players Association, which advocates for athletes’ rights, said under current NCAA rules, 99.3% of top-100 football recruits choose teams from the Power Five conferences.

“The power conferences have advantages and these are the schools that will hold their advantage in said ‘grandrails’ on athlete pay.”

“The reality is, you’re not going to change the recruiting by limiting the players’ opportunities.”

Huma said once states start granting players endorsement rights, Congress would not be inclined to take those rights away, “and we’ll have an opportunity to witness the fact that NCAA sports will still be strong and everybody will tune in.”

There was bipartisan agreement among the senators at the hearing that athletes should have access to endorsement opportunities and that some regulation is needed.

Emmert did not fully escape lawmakers’ anger at the system he presides over.

Sen. Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican, excoriated Emmert for the NCAA’s handling of sexual violence against women. She also noted the case of former Tennessee basketball player Brandy Campbell, who was expelled from school after he was suspended over $11,500 given to his mother by Memphis coach Penny Hardaway to cover the cost of a moving expenses. Hardaway gave the money before he was Memphis’ coach.

Blackburn said the NCAA’s lack of consistency and transparency in the Wiseman case had eroded the organization’s ability to handle issues of player benefits.

“I think a question that must be going through a lot of minds of student-athletes and their parents is, how in the world are they going to be able to trust you to get this right?” Blackburn said.
Turn: Scandal took out 10 percent of managers

FROM BACK PAGE

he went public in an interview with The Athletic. He took down 10% of major league managers and became for some an MVP – Most Virtuous Player.

Houston manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended for the season by Major League Baseball on Jan. 13, and the pair were fired by the Astros later that day. Manfred’s conclusions led to the departures of Boston manager Alex Cora, the Astros’ bench coach in 2017, and new New York Mets manager Carlos Beltran, Houston’s senior player during the title run.

A third of the teams changed managers, including the Mets twice. Milwaukee’s Craig Counsell, hired in May 2015, is already the National League’s senior skipper. New faces include Dusty Baker (Astros), Joe Girardi (Philadephias), Gabe Kapler (Giants), Joe Maddon (Angels), Mike Matheny (Royals), Luis Rojas ( Mets), David Ross (Cubs), Derek Shelton (Pirates), Jayce Tingler (Padres) and Ron Roenicke (Red Sox).

Baker, at 70 the oldest big league manager, is tasked with keeping the Astros on track to become the first team to win 100 or more games in four straight seasons. He also will try to steady a core branded as villains by players and fans in other cities.

“You got to go forward and make sure that it doesn’t happen again,” Baker said. “It certainly is not going to happen on my watch here, and I don’t foresee it happening ever again because this has been an embarrassment for a lot of people.”

Cora’s punishment was delayed by Manfred pending MLB’s investigation into the Red Sox, which could conclude this week. Boston’s turnaround extended to the trade market, with a deal that would send former MVP Mookie Betts and former Cy Young Award winner David Price to the Los Angeles Dodgers as part of a three-team trade involving Minnesota. The delay in the deal being finalized prompted criticism from the players’ association, still smarting over the grievance loss of Chicago Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant, who unsuccessfully claimed the team violated the labor contract by delaying his big league debut until the day his free-agent eligibility would be delayed a year.

Bryant’s trade value increased with arbitrator Mark Irvings’ decision, because acquiring teams can be certain he cannot go free for two more seasons. The cost of top free agents was never more vivid than this offseason.

Players who switched teams included pitcher Gerrit Cole ($234 million from the Yankees), third baseman Anthony Rendon ($245 million from the Nationals for $245 million), right-hander Zack Wheeler ($118 million from the Phillies), third baseman Josh Donaldson ($92 million from the Twins) and left-hander Madison Bumgarner ($85 million from the Diamondbacks).

Right-hander Stephen Strasburg became a free agent shortly after winning the World Series MVP award, then stayed with the Nationals for $235 million.

On the December day he signed with the Yankees, Cole thanked pioneering player Curt Flood, former union head Marvin Miller and others who fought to gain free agency and then to preserve it.

“It’s so important that players know the other sacrifices that players made in order to keep the integrity of the game where it is,” Cole said.

All those big bucks and pre-Christmas deals contrasted with the slow markets of the prior two offseasons. Spending followed MLB’s fourth straight attendance drop, to 68.5 million, down from 73.9 million in 2017.

“It’s a more competitive environment. More teams are trying to win,” New York Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen said.

Washington will raise the championship flag for the first time in franchise history and will try to become the first repeat winner since the Yankees from 1998-2000.

New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone, left, smiles as Gerrit Cole tries on a Yankee jersey as he is introduced on Dec. 18 in New York. The pitcher left the Astros for a 9-year $324 million contract.

Red Sox give Roenicke interim manager’s tag

By Jimmy Golen

FORT MYERS, Fla. — It took Ron Roenicke almost five years to get another chance as a major league manager.

He’ll need to wait at least until next week for “permanency.”

The Red Sox made Roenicke their interim manager Tuesday, promoting the former Brewers skipper to replace Alex Cora on the day Boston’s pitchers and catchers reported for the start of spring training.

Although there is no expiration date on Roenicke’s tenure, the interim tag will stay until Major League Baseball completes its investigation into whether the Red Sox engaged in illegal sign-stealing during their 2018 World Series championship season.

If the probe clears Roenicke, who has denied being part of any rules violations, he is expected to stay.

“We felt that naming Ron our interim manager was the best way to respect the investigation that’s ongoing into our 2018 club. But we feel very strongly about Rom’s ability to lead this group and how well-suited he is for this task,” Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom said in a news conference on the eve of the team’s first formal workout.

“We have no reason to think that there is anything that would cause an adverse result for Ron in this investigation,” Bloom said. “We’re going to respect the ongoing investigation and we’ll address permanency once it’s complete.”

Just one year after winning the World Series in his first season in Boston, Cora was let go when Commissioner Rob Manfred named him as a ringleader behind the Astros’ 2017 illegal sign-stealing.

The Red Sox have maintained that there was no similar scheme after Cora took over in Boston the next year.

Manfred said last week that he hoped to have the Red Sox investigation completed before the start of spring training. But a person with knowledge of the probe said Tuesday the investigation will continue at least into next week. “The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because there was no formal announcement.

Red Sox pitchers and catchers reported Tuesday and had their first workout Wednesday. Rather than open spring training without a manager, the team gave the job to Roenicke — for now.

Roenicke, 63, takes over a team that is dealing with the fallout not only from the cheating investigation but also the salary dump of onetime NL MVP Mookie Betts and 2012 Cy Young winner David Price.

After winning a franchise-record 108 regular-season games and the World Series in 2018, the Red Sox missed the playoffs for the first time since 2015.

“We’re very disappointed — as all these players are — in what happened last year,” Roenicke said. “And our focus is to try to get back in the playoffs, and seeing what happens after that.”

Roenicke spent five years as the Brewers manager from 2010-15, winning 96 games and the NL Central title in his first season and finishing as runner-up for NL manager of the year. In all, he led Milwaukee to a 342-331 record in five seasons.
Rays, said Saturday he regretted Morton, now with the Tampa Bay team.

"I'm remorseful for everything that happened in 2017, for everything that we did as a group, and for the players that were affected directly by us doing this and some other things," Gonzalez said. He later added: "I wish that we could take it back, but there's nothing we can do now."

Major League Baseball's investigation into the alleged first made publicly by former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers resulted in one-season suspensions for manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow, a $5 million fine and the loss of Houston's first- and second-round draft picks in 2020 and 2021. Hinch and Luhnow were fired by the Astros, and Boston manager Alex Cora and New York Mets manager Carlos Beltran also lost their jobs for their involvement in the sign-stealing system for the Astros. Cora was bench coach and Beltran was a player on the 2017 team.

Former Astros pitcher Charlie Morton, now with the Tampa Bay Rays, said Saturday he regretted not making an effort to stop the sign-stealing at the time. The current Astros have mostly avoided commenting since the results were released from MLB's probe into the elaborate method they used to try to tip off teammates as to what type of pitch was coming.

Gonzalez, a multi-positional player starting his second season of a $21 million, two-year contract with the Twins, had a career year in 2017 with the Astros. He hit .303 with 23 home runs and 90 RBIs in 134 games, with an OPS (.907) that was 148 points better than any other season of his eight-year career.

"I can't control how people think of me. I can control how hard I work, and that's the way that I prepare for this season," Gonzalez said at Minnesota's training facility in Fort Myers, Fla. As for whether the Astros would have won the title without the assistance of the sign-stealing system, featuring outfield video cameras and trash can banging?

"You're never going to know. That was a great team. Great guys, too. Beside everything that happened, I know for a fact that they're great guys, but it's hard to answer that question," Gonzalez said. The Twins have two new pitchers, Rich Hill and Kenta Maeda, who were on the Los Angeles Dodgers team that lost to the Astros in the 2017 World Series. Gonzalez said he planned to speak to them but downplayed the lasting effect of his connection to the scandal.

"I'm sure we're going to have a great relationship," Gonzalez said. The players still with the Astros will have a harder time escaping the backlash around baseball. "They're going to be booed. Hopefully they can get through that," Gonzalez said. "I know they have a great team, too, and I hope to face them in the playoffs."

The Houston Astros' Marwin Gonzalez throws his bat after striking out against Cleveland Indians starting pitcher Carlos Carrasco during the fifth inning of a game in Cleveland on May 26, 2018.

Jeff Grisham, The Orange County Register/2018

Maddon intrigued by Ohtani, focused on future

BY GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Three days after Joe Maddon's 66th birthday, the Los Angeles Angels' new manager sat down in a familiar spring training complex and reminded everybody he was into two-way players before they were cool.

Left-hander Deshawn Warren was the Angels' second-round pick in 1992, when Maddon was a roving minor league instructor for the organization that employed him for his first three decades in baseball. Although Warren never got out of the low minors as a pitcher, he was maybe the fastest runner in the house they left behind in Long Beach.

Maddon has always been intrigued by that," Maddon said. "I've always thought it's something that should be looked into more deeply."

Maddon has prided himself on being willing to be an innovator and an unconventional thinker for his entire career. He isn't narrowing his mind as he heads into the first season of his homecoming with the Angels.

Ohtani's unique progress is among Maddon's most important concerns over the next six weeks in Arizona, along with the evolution of a starting rotation that will hopefully include Ohtani before Memorial Day.

The Angels are targeting mid-May for Ohtani's return to the big-league mound, general manager Billy Eppler revealed Tuesday while pitchers and catchers reported to Tempe Diablo Stadium.

Ohtani will be available as a designated hitter on opening day, but he will take days away from the big-league team to make rehab pitching starts in the minors.

Eppler and Ohtani have detailed plans for the two-way star's final comeback from Tommy John surgery and subsequent offseason knee surgery, which pushed back his pitching progress. Maddon is on board with the plans, but he also intends to make decisions by speaking face-to-face with Ohtani.

"I think patience is a key word with all of this," Maddon said. "I've been in development my whole life, so when you're trying to develop a major league talent like him here, coming off the injury situations that he's had, it's important to be very patient, and I am."

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Removing the STAIN
As workouts begin, baseball tries to turn page on scandal

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Baseball returns to the field this week when pitchers, catchers and cheaters report to spring training.

Fans await the annual sunny scenes of favorites stretching on bright green grass in Florida and Arizona.

This year the players bring along dark clouds of scandal — the 2017 World Series champion Houston Astros have been tainted by their sign-stealing scam and the 2018 champion Boston Red Sox have been accused of similar subversion.

Teams hope once workouts start, the stain will fade.

“I think those story lines will weave in and out, but that spring training is that juncture for individual fan bases to be optimistic about what the season ahead holds and it shifts back to that,” Toronto Blue Jays President Mark Shapiro said. “There’s a natural kind of rhythm to spring training that diverts to the positive stories.”

But first, confessions?

Some regard baseball’s blemish from sign stealing as vivid as the acne on the backs of steroids-swelled sluggers of the 1990s and early 2000s.

None of the current members of the Astros have publicly expressed contrition for breaking prohibitions against using a video camera to swipe signs from opposing catchers in 2017 and 2018. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said spring training might be the appropriate time for a group mea culpa because fessing up individually during the offseason “could be sort of a treacherous road to go down.”

Former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers, now with Oakland, sparked the scandal in November when...