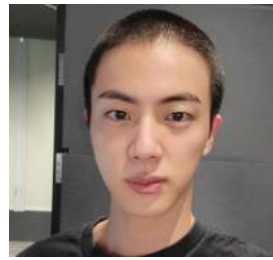


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STARS AND STRIPES

stars and stripes.com

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PHOTOS BY GIANCARLO CASEM/U.S. Air Force

Master Sgt. John Malloy and Staff Sgt. Jacob Puente, both from 912th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, secure the AGM-183A Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon as it is loaded under the wing of a B-52H Stratofortress at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., in August.

Missile milestone

Air Force carries out the first live-fire test of its first hypersonic weapon

BY DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force on Monday carried out the first live-fire test of its first hypersonic weapon, which can travel at least five times the speed of sound, according to service officials.

The Air Force and contractor Lockheed Martin have been developing the AGM-183A air-to-ground missile system — better known as the ARRW — since 2018.

“The ARRW team successfully designed and tested an air-launched hypersonic missile in five years,” said Brig. Gen. Jason



A B-52H Stratofortress assigned to the 419th Flight Test Squadron undergoes pre-flight procedures at Edwards Air Force Base.

Bartolomei, the program executive officer for weapons and director of the Armament Directorate.

The “all-up-round” test was done off the coast of Southern California, and it appears “all objectives were met,” the Air Force said. An all-up-round test is one that evaluates the weapon in its fully assembled condition. The end-to-end test succeeded when the live warhead struck and detonated in a previously designated area in the Pacific.

Last week, the Air Force

SEE MILESTONE ON PAGE 5

GAO: Career counseling attendance falling short

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

More than half of all service members leaving active duty don't attend a mandatory class designed to help them prepare for civilian life, according to a recent report by a government watchdog agency.

The military services collectively waived the attendance requirement 53% of the time for a two-day course under the Transition Assistance Program, the Government Accountability Office found.

The Air Force and Navy, at 92% and 86% respectively, had the highest percentage of waivers for the course granted during a study period lasting from April 1, 2021, to March 30, 2022.

Service members' readiness for civilian life is assessed using a three-tier ranking system based on the level of help needed. Service members in the third tier require maximum support. They're typically younger, lack a college education and have fewer skills, the report stated.

Of the 119,261 active-duty service members rated over the study period, about 41,000 were assigned to tier 3, according to the study. The GAO found that 22% of those in the third tier, or nearly 11,000, received waivers for the class.

“TAP staff we interviewed at two installations expressed concern that 2-day class attendance was waived for too many service members, which could undermine their successful transition,” the report stated.

Most TAP counseling pathways

SEE ATTENDANCE ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Most small SUVs flunk crash tests, remain safe

Associated Press

DETROIT — Most small SUVs flunked the latest frontal crash tests done by the insurance industry, but oddly enough, they're just as safe as they were before.

That's because the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety updated the test so it places more emphasis on keeping back-seat passengers safe.

Only the Ford Escape and Volvo XC40 got the top "good" rating in this year's testing released Tuesday.

The Toyota RAV4 was rated "acceptable," while Audi's Q3, the Nissan Rogue and the Subaru Forester were "marginal."

The remainder, the Buick Encore, Chevrolet Equinox, Honda CR-V and HR-V, Hyundai Tucson, Jeep Compass, Jeep Renegade, Mazda CX-5 and Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross got the bottom rating of "poor."

IIHS President David Harkey said the test is being changed because vehicle structures, air bags and seat belts have made the

SUVs safer for front-seat passengers than those in the back. Now, the risk of fatal injury is 46% higher for rear-seat passengers than drivers in the front, Harkey said.

"Before we were just focused on how well the driver was protected," Harkey said. "It's not that the vehicle has become any less safe."

The institute has a history of changing its widely watched tests in an effort to get automakers to make safety improvements, and Harkey says they normally respond to the changes.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 14)	\$1.03
Dollar buys (Dec. 14)	0.9245
British pound (Dec. 14)	\$1.20
Japanese yen (Dec. 14)	133.00
South Korean won (Dec. 14)	1274.00

South Korea (Won)	1291.99
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9247
Thailand (Baht)	34.55
Turkey (NewLira)	18.6374

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

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
Britain (Pound)	1.2422
Canada (Dollar)	1.3538
China (Yuan)	6.9445
Denmark (Krone)	6.9866
Egypt (Pound)	24.6640
Euro	1.0648
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7835
Hungary (Forint)	384.47
Israel (Shekel)	3.909
Japan (Yen)	135.00
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3061
Norway (Krone)	9.7690
Philippines (Peso)	55.48
Poland (Zloty)	4.41
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7595
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3446

INTEREST RATES

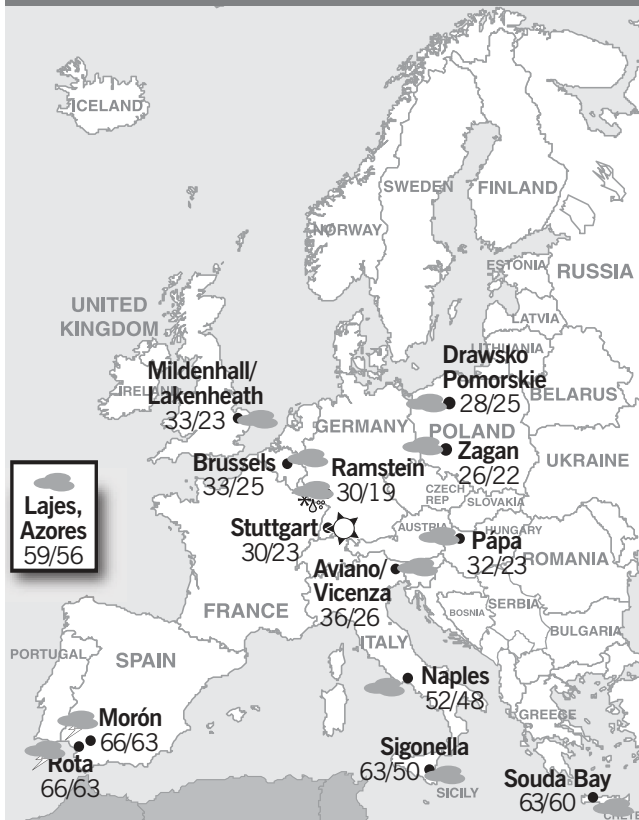
Prime rate	7.00
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	3.83
3-month bill	4.40
30-year bond	3.58

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

Future of key US Navy hub hinges on talks

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

Negotiations now underway between the United Kingdom and a tiny Indian Ocean nation could have significant repercussions for a strategically located U.S. Navy installation on the island of Diego Garcia.

The British Indian Ocean Territory, which includes Diego Garcia, has been mired in controversy since the late 1960s when the British expelled the roughly 2,000 island inhabitants to clear the way for construction of a joint U.K.-U.S. military base.

Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia hosts units from the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Space Force and the U.K. Royal Navy. Located in the center of the Indian Ocean, the island's airfield can accommodate bombers, which are in relatively close range of Middle Eastern and South Asian hotspots.

The original 50-year agreement between the U.S. and U.K. was extended in 2016 and is set to expire in 2036.

Most of the locals forced out 50 years ago ended up in Mauritius and the Seychelles, where many have for decades petitioned to return to the island.

Mauritius has also maintained it holds rightful sovereignty over the entire British Indian Ocean Territory, which is made up of roughly 1,000 mostly tiny islands. The U.K. has consistently rejected Mauritius' claims and insisted that returning the original inhabitants would not be feasible.

Last month, the U.K. and Maur-



SARAH VILLEGAS/U.S. Navy

U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Samuel Paparo, third from right, speaks with sailors at Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia on Friday.

itian governments announced they would begin negotiations to resolve "all outstanding issues" on the territory, according to a Nov. 22 brief published by The House of Commons Library, a research arm within the U.K. Parliament.

U.S. officials have shown no inclination to abandon the island, a position highlighted last week during a visit to Diego Garcia by the head of U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Adm. Samuel Paparo spent Thursday and Friday meeting with the installation's leadership, uniformed personnel and contract workers to discuss the importance of the facility for supporting operational forces deployed to the Indi-

an Ocean, the Navy said in a news release Friday.

"The visit underscored the strategic importance of Diego Garcia to an enduring free and open Indo-Pacific by enabling presence, assured access, and defense to the global commons," the news release stated.

Diego Garcia was a key logistical hub during America's 20-year military intervention in Afghanistan.

Some British and American observers are concerned that China would fill any vacuum created by a withdrawal of U.S. and British military presence on Diego Garcia.

During a meeting last month of the House of Commons Foreign Af-

fairs Committee, Henry Smith, a Conservative Party member of Parliament, asked the U.K. foreign secretary for assurances that the negotiations with Mauritius would have "an absolute red line" on British and U.S. security interests, particularly as they concern China.

"I can give an absolute assurance in that regard," James Cleverly responded. "This is an issue that we take incredibly seriously. We are very alive to that, and we will make sure that that is at the heart of the British position on the negotiations that we have in Mauritius."

Fellow Conservative lawmaker Daniel Kawczynski said he was

contacting U.S. lawmakers to "sound the alarm" about the negotiations, according to a Dec. 2 article by the London-based tabloid Daily Mail.

"If you look at the amount of investment the Chinese have in Mauritius, I would argue that for all intents and purposes they control Mauritius," Kawczynski told the newspaper.

"They have a policy of hoovering up all of these islands in the South China Sea ... the idea the Chinese are not going to take advantage of us giving up these islands is wrong," he said.

U.S. Rep. Mike Waltz, the ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, told the Daily Mail that the subcommittee should look into the issue.

But Blake Herzinger, an Indo-Pacific defense policy expert and a nonresident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute think tank, wrote last year that concerns about the U.S. being ousted from the island are overblown.

The Mauritian government "has sought to assuage those fears by offering, twice, to lease the land to the U.S. for up to 99 years, if it is returned to their control," Herzinger wrote in an essay published online Feb. 15, 2021, by the Australia-based think tank Lowy Institute.

In addition, Mauritius' ambassador to the United Nations has said he favors continued U.S. presence at Diego Garcia, Herzinger wrote.

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US, Japan wrap command post exercise

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP ASAKA, Japan — U.S. and Japanese troops concluded their largest-ever command post exercise this week, honing skills to fight and win without large bases that might be targeted by missiles.

The annual Yama Sakura exercise, which began Dec. 4, involved 1,200 American and 4,500 Japanese troops at locations all over Japan and at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., U.S. Army Japan spokesman Maj. Devon Thomas said at Camp Asaka north of Tokyo on Monday.

The exercise was the largest-ever command post exercise involving U.S. Army Pacific and the Japanese army, according to an Army news release that day.

The Army's 11th Airborne Division and 7th Infantry Division and the 3rd Marine Division took part in Yama Sakura along with Japan's Ground Component Command, Western Army and Northern Army, the release said.

This year's exercise also sig-

naled a shift in the way the two allies intend to meet a different kind of adversary.

"We can't operate the way our Army has operated over the past 20 years in Afghanistan and Iraq," U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, I Corps commander, said at a press conference Monday.

U.S. forces have spent two decades conducting counterinsurgency operations with the support of large, well-defended bases.

China's massive military buildup includes an expanding arsenal of missiles, with many of them presumably aimed at U.S. bases in Japan. A 2017 report by Navy Cmdr. Thomas Shugart, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, for example, includes satellite imagery of Chinese missile test sites that appear to mimic Yokota, Kadena and Misawa air bases.

I Corps has distributed its headquarters over the past two years and troops are training to work out of scalable, resilient and survivable command posts, Brunson said.

The exercise involved troops at

Asaka and nearby Camp Zama, home of U.S. Army Japan, during Yama Sakura. The drills also incorporated personnel in facilities on the southern island of Kyushu and the northern island of Hokkaido as well as in Washington state, Thomas said.

"We can stay in contact but not necessarily be co-located," Brunson said.

The exercise involved multidomain operations across evolving areas of warfighting such as space and cyber operations, he said.

Japan is looking to acquire a "counterstrike capability" to take out enemy missile sites if the country is attacked, the Ministry of Defense said last month.

Japan is also negotiating to buy U.S.-made Tomahawk cruise missiles, the Yomiuri newspaper reported Oct. 28, citing multiple, unnamed Japanese government sources.

At Monday's press conference, Brunson did not comment directly about the proposed Tomahawk acquisition but said any time allies



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

U.S. service members stand at attention Monday at the conclusion of the Yama Sakura command post exercise at Camp Asaka, Japan.

are developing new capabilities to help them defend their territory, it's important.

"The Tomahawk is a capability that the U.S. joint force possesses," he said.

There is a limit to what a single country can do to resolve disputes, Gen. Tadao Maeda, commander of the Ground Component Command, told reporters at the press

conference, without directly addressing the Tomahawk question.

"It's necessary to strengthen the U.S. alliance and relationships with other countries," he said.

Australian soldiers and a pair of Filipino generals observed this year's Yama Sakura.

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MILITARY

N. Korean border agency hit by US embargo

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Treasury has leveled sanctions on the North Korean border security agency that enforces the communist regime's strict travel ban.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control on Friday sanctioned North Korea's Ministry of State Security Border Guard General Bureau, which provides security at the country's border with China and Russia, according to a Treasury Department news release.

The North Korean bureau helps the regime "thwart escapes through tight border controls, including land mines and shoot-on-sight orders that have resulted in

the deaths of numerous" defectors, according to the Treasury Department release.

Roughly 34,000 North Koreans have defected to the South since 1998, according to data from the South Korean Ministry of Unification. The ministry recorded 72 defectors in 2020 and 17 so far this year.

Moscow and Beijing have agreements with Pyongyang to forcibly repatriate North Koreans who flee the country, according to the U.S. State Department and multiple United Nations reports.

In the same announcement, the Treasury Department sanctioned two people with ties to SEK Studio, a North Korean state-run animation firm that contracts with

foreign companies to supply cheap labor from animators in North Korea and China, according to the release.

Kim Myong Chol, the Paris-based representative for SEK, collected payment on SEK contracts with clients in Europe, according to the department.

Deepak Jadhav, an India-based director of Funsaga Pte Ltd., allegedly contracted with SEK for an animation project, according to the Treasury Department. An unnamed SEK official said Funsaga sent more than \$50,000 to SEK as a result, along with \$15,000 to a Chinese company.

Foreign companies that employ North Korean labor "enable the continued poor treatment that

these workers endure, which includes constant surveillance, being forced to work long hours, and having a significant portion of their wages confiscated by the regime," according to the Treasury announcement.

The Treasury Department first sanctioned SEK Studio on Dec. 10, 2021. The sanctions are meant to stop the named individuals, SEK and its front companies from laundering their money or moving it across international borders, according to the release.

A U.N. Security Council resolution in 2017 expressed concern over North Korean workers working internationally and required member states to repatriate all of them.

"[North Korean] nationals are also often forced to work in foreign countries to generate foreign currency that is utilized to support [its] weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs," the Treasury Department said in its release.

The sanctions against North Korean affiliates were part of the Treasury Department's broader list that targeted 40 people and organizations from El Salvador, Guatemala, Iran, Mali, China, Russia and other countries in observance of International Anti-Corruption Day and Human Rights Day.

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

US Marine suspected of crashing stolen car near Iwakuni station

By HANA KUSUMOTO
AND JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — Japanese police suspect a Marine of stealing a car from a local dealer and crashing it into another vehicle at an Iwakuni city intersection.

The Marine, whom neither local authorities nor the Marine Corps identified Tuesday, is in custody, according to a news release posted Monday on the city's website. It did not state where the Marine is being held.

The city provided only vague details in the release. The Marine stole the car Dec. 3, and the crash occurred the same day at an intersection in the Asahi machi section of Iwakuni, according to the release.

A local TV news report Tuesday by Yamaguchi Broadcasting Co.

included security camera footage of a man kicking and then opening a local dealership's door around 6:40 a.m. followed by a white sports car driving away.

The Marine fled the crash scene without providing first aid or calling authorities, according to the city's release. It did not provide injury details.

A spokesman for Iwakuni police said by phone Tuesday that the incident is under investigation and declined to provide further information.

Japanese government spokespeople typically speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

A Marine spokesman said the air station is cooperating with Japanese police but likewise declined to provide further information, citing an ongoing investigation.

"Our service members are ex-

pected to show respect to the community that we call home," base spokesman Maj. Gerard Farao said in an email to Stars and Stripes on Tuesday. "We take all allegations seriously and hold all service members to a high standard of professionalism."

Iwakuni city, representing Yamaguchi prefecture and four other municipalities near the air station, on Monday asked the air station and the defense bureau to take measures to prevent similar incidents. The air station, home to the Navy's Carrier Air Wing 5, is about 25 miles south of Hiroshima.

"It is extremely regrettable that an incident like this has occurred since it gives great concern to the residents living near the base," the city's release said.

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Ex-sailor sentenced for sexually exploiting kids

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A 29-year-old former sailor was sentenced to more than 47 years in prison for producing and receiving images of child sexual abuse through a social media app while assigned to Naval Air Station Lemoore in California, according to the Justice Department and court documents.

Christopher George Millican of Coalinga, Calif., engaged in inappropriate behavior with an 11-year-old and sexually explicit behavior with a 15-year-old from March to August 2018, according to court documents.

"Millican pursued a methodical and repetitive course of conduct, exploiting or attempting to exploit multiple minors to satisfy his own deviant sexual fantasies," U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert said in a statement.

In July 2018, a parent reported to Snapchat, a social media app, that a user, later identified as Millican, had been engaging in inappropriate communications with her 11-year-old daughter, according to the Justice Department. He had been "flirting" and repeatedly asking for pictures and location information for the child, according to the criminal complaint against Millican.

Snapchat reported the conduct to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, along with additional images and videos found on his account depicting another, then 15-year-old minor, engaged in sexually explicit conduct. He'd also communicated with four other minor girls using the alias, Taylor Fields.

Police in Hanford, Calif., traced Millican's IP address — a numeric designation that identifies its location on the internet — to a home on

NAS Lemoore, according to the complaint. Some of the messages were exchanged while Millican was deployed aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry Truman in the fall and summer of 2018.

Investigators identified one minor victim, who informed them that Millican had coerced her into creating and sending him these images.

"I'll make sure to hunt down someone close to u since I took screenshots of ur full friends list and I might not keep everything a secret," he wrote to the girl, according to the criminal complaint.

Naval Criminal Investigative Service executed a search warrant in December 2018 of Millican's person, home and vehicle with investigators from the Department of Homeland Security Investigations and the Fresno County Sheriff's Office. No additional images were found, according to court documents.

A jury found Millican guilty in July, and he was sentenced Friday in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California. He received 47 years and six months for one count of sexual exploitation of children and one count of receipt of material involving the sexual exploitation of minors. Upon release from prison, he'll be supervised for life.

Millican was discharged from the Navy in October 2020 while a petty officer 2nd class assigned to the Fleet Readiness Center West at NAS Lemoore, according to his official service record. An aviation machinist's mate who enlisted in November 2014, he had previously served in Norfolk, Va., and Pensacola, Fla.

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MILITARY

Milestone: Weapon can travel 5 times speed of sound

FROM PAGE 1

cleared the initial hurdle in this late-stage testing process — loading the system onto a B-52 bomber and taking it back off.

Making that step allowed the Air Force to move on to live-fire testing. Lockheed has said the ARRW should become operational within a year.

The live-fire test marked the first launch of a full prototype operational ARRW missile, Air Force officials said.

Tests earlier this year focused on evaluating the booster — a rocket-powered vehicle that carries the warhead to hypersonic speeds before releasing it to strike a target.

“With this test, we are on the cusp of an operational capability that can be deployed to the men and women in uniform,” Lockheed Vice President of Air Dominance and Strike Weapons Jay Pitman said in a statement.

The Pentagon has been focused on adding modern hypersonic components for years, particularly when it became known that military competitors such as Russia and China were also racing toward the technology.

Claims by Moscow that Russian forces have already used a hypersonic missile in Ukraine this year have not been confirmed by U.S. defense or intelligence officials.

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NICOLE LEDBETTER/U.S. Air Force

Airmen secure the Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon to a B-52H at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., on Nov. 2. The ARRW is scheduled to be operational in the fall of 2023.

Shipyard touts new training facility

BY TREVOR METCALFE

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

PORTSMOUTH, Va. — One of the Navy's four public shipyards has completed a major new training facility for its thousands of workers.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard recently opened a new \$73.3 million, 157,000-square-foot training facility in Portsmouth as part of a shipyard modernization program. The four-story building means all the production training at the shipyard now happens in one location.

The new facility will allow the Navy to coordinate training as one team, shipyard commander Capt. Dianna Wolfson said in the announcement.

“From this very place, we will be providing training for ships that will be in service decades from now and training thousands upon thousands of shipyard employees who will develop and strengthen foundational skills for their entire careers,” Wolfson said.

The four-story building includes 34 academic classrooms and 26 mock-up areas, and will be used to train workers in quality assurance, operations, engineering and lifting and handling. It will also support training for Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers and Virginia-class submarines.

The facility is part of a huge 20-year, \$21 billion plan to modernize the Navy's four public shipyards, including Norfolk Naval Shipyard and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Unveiled in 2018, the plan would upgrade aging dry-docks to continue servicing ships and submarines.

A 2022 study found that the cost to fully implement the plan has grown by at least \$4 billion and is expected to increase more, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

With roots tracing back to 1767, the shipyard employs around 6,000 military personnel and another 11,000 civilian workers.

At a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Rear Adm. Maria “Lore” Aguayo, commander with Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Atlantic, said the project faced several pandemic challenges like significant manufacturing delays and skilled labor shortages.

“However, the team worked together seamlessly and always found a way to keep moving forward,” she said.

Attendance: More than half of service members skip class

FROM PAGE 1

participants did not start the program at least a year before their separation as required, potentially impacting their chances of a successful transition, according to the study.

The study included interviews with program officials and participants at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas; Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii; Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina; Scott Air Force Base in Illinois; and U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria in Germany.

Researchers found that although the services and TAP policy office collected and reviewed data related to the two-day classes, officials did not fully use that information to understand or improve results.

But the study also showed that more than

90% of transitioning service members participated in the overarching program and that attendance of the 2-day class had increased over previous years.

TAP services include a self-assessment, initial counseling and an analysis of preparedness. All transitioning service members must attend a three-day class covering topics such as financial readiness, translating military skills to a civilian environment, veterans benefits and services, and employment.

Two-day classes designed specifically to meet service members' interests and goals cover topics such as employment, higher education, vocational training and entrepreneurship.

The report noted there are some exceptions, such as if there is compelling belief that a service member will not face major challenges or

has been deployed, that allow waiving the requirement. The secretary of defense may waive the participation requirement or delegate that authority, the study noted.

The GAO made several recommendations. One urged the services to better analyze TAP performance information “on when service members begin initial and pre-separation counseling to develop and implement a corrective action plan to improve timeliness.”

“Such analyses could help (DOD) officials better understand which tier 3 service members are at greatest risk of not attending a 2-day class,” the report stated. “It could also help them develop effective corrective action plans.”

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BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

A soldier was killed in a shooting at Fort Stewart on Monday morning, an Army official at the Georgia installation said.

The suspected shooter was captured by military police officers at the base and transferred to the custody of Army Criminal Investigation Command agents, Kevin Larson, a Fort Stewart spokesman, said Monday afternoon.

The shooting occurred just before 10 a.m. at the installation's

2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division complex, according to Larson.

The identity of the soldier killed was not immediately released Monday. Larson said the victim's name would be released after the next-of-kin notification process was completed.

He also said law enforcement officials were continuing their probe into the incident and additional details about the alleged shooter would not be immediately released.

He declined to say if the person arrested was a soldier.

Larson said there was “no active threat” to the Fort Stewart community as of Monday afternoon.

Fort Stewart emergency response officials briefly locked down the installation's 2nd Brigade complex after the shooting was reported, Larson said.

The complex is a gated area where 2nd Brigade soldiers live and work, and it is separate from Fort Stewart's main garrison area.

Larson said Fort Stewart's Winn Army Community Hospital would make behavioral health counseling available to all impacted by Monday's incident.

Fort Stewart, which is located in the coastal region of Georgia, is home to the Army's 3rd Infantry Division and is the largest U.S. military installation — in terms of acres — east of the Mississippi River.

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Twitter: @CDicksteinDC**2 sailors hurt after falling into water during Haiti mission**

BY DOUG G. WARE

Stars and Stripes

Two Navy sailors were recovering from minor injuries Tuesday after they and many others fell into the waters off Haiti during a humanitarian mission, service officials said.

The sailors and 17 others fell into the waters off the coast in Jeremie, a commune in western Haiti, as they were being transferred

from a small ship onto the hospital ship USNS Comfort.

The Navy's 4th Fleet said the small boat became unstable during the transfer, tipped over and the people in the boat fell into the water. All 19 eventually made it safely onto the hospital ship with the help of the U.S. Coast Guard, which had some cutters in the area.

Officials didn't detail the two

sailors' injuries, but the 4th Fleet said they should make a full recovery.

As a result of the accident, the Navy halted ship transfers for Tuesday “until a safe alternative for personnel transfer has been identified.”

A spokesman for the 4th Fleet said it's not yet known whether the mission will continue as scheduled through Thursday.

The Comfort traveled to Haiti as part of a five-nation medical mission — “Continuing Promise” — to provide medical and dental care to needy people in those countries, which also included Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

Haiti was the mission's final stop.

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EUROPE

US poised to approve Patriots for Ukraine

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR
AND MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is poised to approve sending a Patriot missile battery to Ukraine, finally agreeing to an urgent request from Ukrainian leaders desperate for more robust weapons to shoot down incoming Russian attacks, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

The approval is likely to come later this week and could be announced as early as Thursday, said three officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the decision is not final and has not been made public.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pressed Western leaders as recently as Monday to provide more advanced weapons to help his country.

Providing Patriot surface-to-air missiles would advance the kinds

of defense systems the West is sending to help Ukraine repel Russian aerial attacks, and could mark an escalation.

During a video conference on Monday, Zelenskyy told host Germany and other leaders of the Group of Seven industrial powers that his country needed long-range missiles, modern tanks, artillery and missile batteries and other high-tech air defense systems to counter Russian attacks that have knocked out electricity and water supplies for millions of Ukrainians.

He acknowledged that, “Unfortunately, Russia still has an advantage in artillery and missiles.”

And he said that protecting Ukraine’s energy facilities from Russian missiles and Iranian drones “will be the protection of the whole of Europe, since with these strikes Russia is provoking a hu-

manitarian and migration catastrophe not only for Ukraine, but also for the entire EU.”

White House and Pentagon leaders have said consistently that providing Ukraine with additional air defenses is a priority, and Patriot missiles have been under consideration for some time.

One of the officials said that as the winter closed in that consideration took on increased priority.

In other Ukraine war developments Tuesday:

■ Dozens of countries and international organizations threw their weight and more than 1 billion dollars in aid pledges behind an urgent new push to keep Ukrainians powered, fed, warmed and moving as winter approaches.

An international donor conference in Paris quickly racked up substantial promises of financial and in-kind support, a defiant re-

sponse to sustained Russian aerial bombardment of critical infrastructure that has plunged millions of Ukrainian civilians into deepening cold and dark.

Ukraine’s president made an impassioned argument that such aid could pressure Russia into pursuing peace, and conference donors strongly condemned the Kremlin’s savaging of power stations, water facilities and other essential services in Ukraine.

French President Emmanuel Macron, the conference host, denounced the bombardments as war crimes, asserting that Moscow had resorted to pounding civilian infrastructure because its troops suffered setbacks on the battlefields and Russia’s “military weaknesses have been exposed to all.”

Russia “has chosen a cynical strategy, aiming to destroy civil-

ian infrastructure in order to put Ukraine on its knees,” Macron said. “The objective is clear: Respond to military defeats by spreading terror among civilians, try to break the back as it can’t maintain the front.”

■ A senior U.S. military official said the U.S. believes Russia’s stocks of new or “fully serviceable” artillery rocket ammunition will last until “early 2023.” The official, who spoke to Pentagon reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing operations in Ukraine, said Russia was turning to the use of degraded ammunition, which is more unpredictable and risky. The official said the Russian military will likely struggle to replenish its stocks by increasing domestic production, buying more from foreign suppliers and refurbishing older ammunition.

Kherson still toiling to remove Russian traps a month later

BY INNA VARENYTSIA
AND JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine — A hand grenade jerry-rigged into the detergent tray of a Kherson home’s washing machine. A street sign maliciously directing passersby toward a deadly minefield. A police station that allegedly housed a torture chamber but remains so booby-trapped that demining crews can’t even start to hunt for evidence.

Sunday marked exactly one month since Russia’s troops withdrew from Kherson and its vicinity after an eight-month occupation, sparking jubilation across Ukraine. But life in the southern city is still very far from normal.

The departing Russians left behind all sorts of ugly surprises, and their artillery continues to batter the city from new, dug-in positions across the Dnieper River. The regional administration said Saturday that shelling over the past month has killed 41 people, including a child, in Kherson, and 96 were hospitalized.

Residents’ access to electricity still comes and goes, although water is largely connected, and indoor heating has only very recently been restored — and only to about 70-80% of the city — after the Russians last month blew up a giant central heating station that served much of the city.

For authorities and citizens, sifting through the countless headaches and hazards left be-

hind by the Russians, and bracing for new ones, is a daily chore.

On Friday alone, according to the local affiliate of public broadcaster Suspilne, Russian forces shelled the region 68 times with mortars, artillery, tank and rocket fire. Meanwhile, in the last month, a total of 5,500 people have taken evacuation trains out, and work crews have cleared 115 miles of road, Suspilne reported.

When aid trucks arrived a month ago, war-weary and desperate residents flocked to the central Svoboda (Freedom) Square for food and supplies. But after a Russian strike on the square as a line of people queued to enter a bank in late November, such large gatherings have become less common and aid is doled out from smaller, more discreet distribution points.

Regional officials say some 80% of Kherson’s pre-war population of about 320,000 fled after the Russians moved in, days after their invasion began on Feb. 24. With some 60,000-70,000 residents remaining, the city now has a feel of a ghost town. Those who remain mostly keep indoors because they’re cautious about making forays into the streets.

“Life is getting back to normal, but there is a lot of shelling,” said Valentyna Kytayska, 56, who lives in the nearby village of Chornobaiivka. She lamented the nightly “Bam! Bam!” and the unsettling uncertainty of where the Russian ordnance may land.



EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

Tamila Pyhyda cries during the exhumation of her husband, Serhii Pyhyda, who was killed by Russian forces in the recently retaken town of Vysokopillya, Ukraine, on Dec. 5.

Normal is a relative term for a country at war. There’s no telling whether what Russia insists on calling a “special military operation” will end in days, weeks, months or even years.

In the meantime, painstaking efforts go on to establish a better sense of normalcy, like clearing the mess and mines left behind by the Russians, in tough wintertime weather.

“The difficulties are very simple, it’s the weather conditions,” said one military demining squad member, who goes by the nom de guerre of Tekhnik. He said some of their equipment simply doesn’t work in frost conditions “because the soil is frozen like concrete.”

The deployment of additional teams could help ease the heavy workload, he said. “To give you an

idea, during the month of our work, we found and removed several tons of mines,” said Tekhnik, adding that they focused only on about 4 square miles.

In Kherson’s Beryslavskiyi district, a main road was blocked off with a sign reading “Mines Ahead” and rerouting passersby to a smaller road. In fact, it was that side road which was mined, and cost the lives of some military deminers. A few weeks later, four police officers were also killed there, including the police chief from the northern city of Chernihiv, who had come down to help Kherson regain its footing.

The general state of disrepair of weather-beaten roads helped the outgoing Russians disguise their deadly traps: Potholes, some covered with soil, provided a conve-

nient place to lay mines. Sometimes, the Russians cut into the asphalt to make holes themselves.

Demining squads go slowly house-to-house to ensure it’s safe for owners or previous residents to return. Experts say a single home can take up to three days to be cleared.

One crew turned up a hand grenade in one house, stuffed into a washing machine — the pin placed in such a way that opening the detergent tray would set off an explosion.

The city’s main police station, where detainees were reportedly tortured, is packed with explosives. When demining squads tried to work their way in, part of the building exploded — so they’ve shelved the project for now.

NATION

Starving seabirds on Alaska coast show climate peril

By CHRISTINA LARSON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dead and dying seabirds collected on the coasts of the northern Bering and southern Chukchi seas over the past six years reveal how the Arctic’s fast-changing climate is threatening the ecosystems and people who live there, according to a report released Tuesday by U.S. scientists.

Local communities have reported numerous emaciated bodies of seabirds — including shearwaters, auklets and murre — that usually eat plankton, krill or fish, but appear to have had difficulty finding sufficient food. The hundreds of distressed and dead birds are only a fraction of ones that starved, sci-

entists say.

“Since 2017, we’ve had multi-species seabird die-offs in the Bering Strait region,” said Gay Sheffield, a biologist at University of Alaska Fairbanks, based in Nome, Alaska, and a co-author of the report. “The one commonality is emaciation, or starvation.”

The seabirds are struggling because of climate-linked ecosystem shifts — which can affect the supply and the timing of available food — as well as a harmful algal bloom and a viral outbreak in the region, she said.

And their peril jeopardizes the human communities, as well: “Birds are essential to our region — they are nutritionally and econom-

ically essential,” said Sheffield.

The data on seabirds is part of an annual report released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, called the “Arctic Report Card,” that documents changes in a region warming faster than anywhere else on Earth.

“With climate change, the food chain is changing rapidly,” said Don Lyons, a conservation scientist at the National Audubon Society’s Seabird Institute, who was not involved in the report. “Food isn’t predictable in the way it used to be, in terms of where the food is, at different times of the year.”

While seabirds naturally experience some lean years, the report documents a worrying pattern,

said Lyons. “It seems like we’ve passed a tipping point — we’ve moved into a new regime where events that we used to think of as rare and unusual are now common and frequent.”

In the past year, Arctic annual surface air temperatures were the sixth warmest since records began in 1900, the report found. And satellite records revealed that for several weeks last summer, large regions near the North Pole were virtually clear of sea ice.

“The sea ice extent was much lower than long-term average,” said Walt Meier, a sea ice expert at the University of Colorado Boulder and a co-author of the report.

“The most notable thing we saw

was during the summer, we saw a lot of open-water areas up near the North Pole, which was once very rare,” he said. “Several kilometers with very little or no ice, within a couple hundred kilometers of the North Pole.”

“The changes that are happening in the Arctic are so fast and so profound,” said Peter Marra, a conservation biologist at Georgetown University, who was not involved in the report.

Seabirds are metaphorical canaries in the coal mines, when it comes to showing broader ecosystem changes, Marra said, adding, “We need to do a much better job of monitoring these sentinel populations.”

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STARS AND STRIPES

NATION

Scientists tout fusion energy breakthrough

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm announced a “major scientific breakthrough” Tuesday in the decadeslong quest to harness fusion, the energy that powers the sun and stars.

Researchers at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California for the first time produced more energy in a fusion reaction than was used to ignite it, something called net energy gain, the Energy Department said.

The achievement will pave the way for advancements in national defense and the future of clean power, Granholm and other officials said.

Granholm was appearing alongside Livermore researchers at a news conference in Washington.

“This is a landmark achievement for the researchers and staff at the National Ignition Facility who have dedicated their careers to seeing fusion ignition become a reality, and this milestone will undoubtedly spark even more discovery,” Granholm said, adding that the breakthrough “will go down in the history books.”

White House science adviser Arati Prabhakar, appearing with Granholm, called the fusion ignition “a tremendous example of what persistence can achieve” and “an engineering marvel beyond belief.”

Proponents of fusion hope that it could one day produce nearly limitless, carbon-free energy, displacing fossil fuels and other traditional energy sources. Producing energy that powers homes and businesses from fusion is still decades away. But researchers said it

was a significant step nonetheless.

“It’s almost like it’s a starting gun going off,” said Professor Dennis Whyte, director of the Plasma Science and Fusion Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a leader in fusion research. “We should be pushing towards making fusion energy systems available to tackle climate change and energy security.”

Net energy gain has been an elusive goal because fusion happens at such high temperatures and pressures that it is incredibly difficult to control.

Fusion works by pressing hydrogen atoms into each other with such force that they combine into helium, releasing enormous amounts of energy and heat. Unlike other nuclear reactions, it doesn’t create radioactive waste.

Billions of dollars and decades of work have gone into fusion research that has produced exhilarating results — for fractions of a second. Previously, researchers at the National Ignition Facility, the division of Lawrence Livermore where the success took place, used 192 lasers and temperatures multiple times hotter than the center of the sun to create an extremely brief fusion reaction.

The lasers focus an enormous amount of heat on a small metal can. The result is a superheated plasma environment where fusion may occur.

Riccardo Betti, a professor at the University of Rochester and expert in laser fusion, said in an announcement that net energy gained in a fusion reaction would be significant.

But he said there’s a long road ahead before the result generates



DAMIEN JEMISON/AP

This undated image provided by the National Ignition Facility at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory shows the NIF Target Bay in Livermore, Calif. The system uses 192 laser beams converging at the center of this giant sphere to make a tiny hydrogen fuel pellet implode.

sustainable electricity.

He likened the breakthrough to when humans first learned that refining oil into gasoline and igniting it could produce an explosion.

“You still don’t have the engine and you still don’t have the tires,” Betti said. “You can’t say that you have a car.”

The net energy gain achievement applied to the fusion reaction itself, not the total amount of power it took to operate the lasers and run the project. For fusion to be viable, it will need to produce significantly more power and for longer. It is incredibly difficult to control the physics of stars. Whyte

said it has been challenging to reach this point because the fuel has to be hotter than the center of the sun. The fuel does not want to stay hot — it wants to leak out and get cold. Containing it is an incredible challenge, he said.

Net energy gain isn’t a huge surprise from the California lab because of progress it had already made, according to Jeremy Chittenden, a professor at Imperial College in London specializing in plasma physics.

“That doesn’t take away from the fact that this is a significant milestone,” he said.

It takes enormous resources

and effort to advance fusion research. One approach turns hydrogen into plasma, an electrically charged gas, which is then controlled by humongous magnets. This method is being explored in France in a collaboration among 35 countries called the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor as well as by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a private company.

Last year the teams working on those projects in two continents announced significant advancements in the vital magnets needed for their work.

Colo. officials name Boebert winner in race against Frisch

The Denver Post

DENVER — Now weeks after the November midterm elections and Colorado’s Secretary of State announced that U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert did indeed win her race against Adam Frisch, if only by a few hundred votes.

Election officials across the state’s massive 3rd Congressional District tallied votes for days after the Nov. 8 election. Frisch, a Democrat and former Aspen City Council member, took the lead early on but gradually lost ground to Boebert. In the end, initial vote tallies showed Boebert, of Silt, just 554 votes ahead of Frisch.

The congresswoman declared victory at that point and Frisch conceded, but both acknowledged the results weren’t finished yet. Boebert won with such a slim margin that the state’s election laws

required an automatic recount, something Secretary of State Jena



Boebert

Griswold announced officially at the end of last month.

The process lasted nearly two weeks and Griswold’s office announced Monday evening that the recount did not change the election result: Boebert has won a second term in Congress.

In the end the recount only changed four votes.

Boebert lost three and Frisch gained one. The congresswoman won with 50.06% of the votes to Frisch’s 49.89%.

The Secretary of State’s Office will reimburse county election offices for the cost of the recount.

Merck, Moderna detail potential skin cancer vaccine progress, shares rise

Associated Press

Shares of Merck and Moderna jumped Tuesday after the drugmakers said a potential skin cancer vaccine they are developing using the same technology behind COVID-19 preventive shots fared well in a small study.

The drugmakers said a combination of the vaccine and Merck’s immunotherapy Keytruda led to a statistically significant improvement in recurrence-free survival time in patients with phase three or four melanoma who had tumors removed in surgery.

That combination was compared with Keytruda alone in a midstage clinical trial of 157 patients.

Patients received either the

combination or Keytruda after surgery to remove the tumors.

The treatments continued for about a year in both groups unless the disease came back or side effects became severe.

The patient group that took the potential vaccine and Keytruda saw a 44% reduction in the risk of death or the cancer returning, the companies said.

Merck and Moderna expect to start a phase 3 study of the combination next year, and the companies say they intend to “rapidly expand” their approach to other tumor types.

Phase 3 is generally the last and largest clinical study before a drug is submitted to regulators for approval.

The potential vaccine aims to train a patient’s immune sys-

tem to recognize and respond specifically to mutations in the DNA of the patient’s tumor.

Keytruda, Merck’s top seller, primes the body’s immune system to detect and fight tumor cells.

Regulators have approved it to treat several types of cancer.

Merck and Moderna established an agreement to work together in 2016, and the companies plan to share costs and profits in their collaboration.

Merck also paid Moderna \$250 million.

Shares of Cambridge, Mass.-based Moderna Inc. jumped 11% in premarket trading. Kenilworth, N.J.-based Merck & Co. rose nearly 2% and futures indexes climbed.

NATION

Huge storm brings tornadoes, blizzard threat

By **STEPHEN GROVES**
Associated Press

DALLAS — A massive storm blowing across the country spawned tornadoes in parts of Oklahoma and Texas, as much of the United States from the Rocky Mountains to the Midwest braced Tuesday for blizzardlike conditions.

An area stretching from Montana into western Nebraska and Colorado was under blizzard warnings, and the National Weather Service said that as much as 2 feet of snow was possible in some areas of western South Dakota and northwestern Nebraska. Ice and sleet were expected in the eastern Great Plains.

Meanwhile, damage was reported in the Oklahoma town of Wayne after the weather service warned of a “confirmed tornado” shortly after 5 a.m. Tuesday. There were no deaths or injuries due to the tornado, McClain County Sheriff’s Capt. Bryan Murrell said. But as authorities began assessing its impact, it was clear there was widespread damage to Wayne, which is about 45 miles south of Oklahoma City.

“We’ve got multiple family structures with significant damage ... barns, power lines down” in and around the town, Murrell said.

National Weather Service mete-



WILL LESTER, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CALIF.) REGISTER/AP

Evan Freedman, from Los Angeles, puts snow chains on his vehicle as heavy snow falls on Highway 2 near Wrightwood, Calif., on Monday.

orologist Doug Speheger said wind speeds reached 111-135 mph and the tornado was rated EF-2. It was likely on the ground for about two to four minutes, according to the weather service.

The line of thunderstorms that moved across North Texas in the early morning hours brought tornadoes, damaging winds, hail and heavy rain, said National Weather

Service meteorologist Tom Bradshaw. Authorities reported that dozens of homes and businesses were damaged and several people injured.

Bradshaw said there was likely a tornado touchdown in the Dallas-Fort Worth suburb of Grapevine, where two or three businesses were damaged and some homes as well.

In North Richland Hills, another Fort Worth suburb near Grapevine, about 20 homes and businesses were damaged in the storm, North Richland Hills police said. Photos sent by the police department showed a home without a roof, a tree that had been split in half and an overturned vehicle in a parking lot.

There were multiple reports of

damage to homes and businesses near Decatur, about 70 miles northwest of Dallas, the Wise County Office of Emergency Management said. The office of emergency management said one person was injured from flying debris while traveling in their vehicle and the other was injured when their vehicle overturned due to high winds. One person was taken to the hospital and the other was treated at the scene.

Bradshaw said it’s believed to be a tornado that caused the damage south of Decatur.

In parts of Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota, the National Weather Service warned that up to about half an inch of ice could form and winds could gust up to 45 mph. Power outages, tree damage, falling branches and hazardous travel conditions all threatened the region.

All of western Nebraska was under a blizzard warning from Tuesday through Thursday, and the National Weather Services said up to 20 inches of snow was expected in the northwest. Winds of more than 50 mph at times will make it impossible to see outdoors, officials said.

The Nebraska Department of Transportation closed stretches of Interstate 80 and Interstate 76 as heavy snow and high winds made travel dangerous.

At Toys for Tots event in Va., Bidens laud troops

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden helped pack presents for children and encouraged holiday cheer as the White House marked the 75th anniversary of Toys for Tots at an event hosted by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

The event at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in northern Virginia is part of Jill Biden’s Joining Forces initiative, which offers support and resources to families of military members and veterans, as well as their caregivers and survivors. Helping the first couple sort through presents were spouses of Pentagon leaders and local children of service members.

“Military kids like you give our country so much,” Jill Biden said, after a young child read a passage from the Dr. Seuss classic “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.”

She added: “You support your parents through moves and deployments and you sometimes help take care of the family mem-



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

President Joe Biden helps children move donated toys to bins during a Toys for Tots event at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Arlington, Va., on Monday. Toys for Tots is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

bers who came home with maybe illnesses or injuries. And you help out neighbors when they need it, just like you’re going to do today.”

Through the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, Marines and volunteers have sent out 627 million toys to more than 281 million children since 1947, according to the White House. Joe Biden noted that last year, the initiative collected 22 million toys for 8 million children, “giving Santa a run for his

money.”

“But unlike Santa, you don’t wear big red suits, you don’t travel the world in just one night. Instead, you wear dress blues and Army greens,” the president continued. “You stand watch around the world every single night.”

He then had a message for service members and their families: “You aren’t just the heart and soul of our nation, you’re the very spine of our nation. And we owe you.”

Inflation slowed sharply to 7.1% over past year

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Inflation in the United States slowed again last month in the latest sign that price increases are gradually cooling despite the pressures they continue to inflict on American households.

Consumer prices rose 7.1% in November from a year ago, the government said Tuesday. That was down from 7.7% in October and a recent peak of 9.1% in June. It was the fifth straight slowdown.

On a month-to-month basis, the consumer price index rose just 0.1% in November, down from 0.4% in October.

Even with last month’s further easing of inflation, the Federal Reserve plans to keep raising interest rates. On Wednesday, the Fed is set to boost its benchmark rate for a seventh time this year, a move that will further raise borrowing costs for consumers and businesses. Economists have warned that in continuing to tighten credit to fight inflation, the Fed is likely to cause a recession next year.

Tuesday’s government report showed that inflation in November was slowed by less expensive gaso-

line, electricity and used cars, among other items.

Several trends have started to reduce price pressures, though they won’t likely be enough to bring overall inflation back down to levels that Americans were used to anytime soon. The national average for a gallon of regular gas has sunk from \$5 a gallon in June to \$3.26 as of Monday. Many supply chains have also unspooled, helping reduce the costs of imported goods and parts. Prices for lumber, copper, wheat and other commodities have fallen steadily, which tends to lead to lower construction and food costs.

To some economists and Fed officials, such figures are a sign of improvement, even though inflation remains far above the central bank’s annual 2% target and might not reach it until 2024.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has said he is tracking price trends in three different categories to best understand the likely path of inflation: Goods, excluding volatile food and energy costs; housing, which includes rents and the cost of homeownership; and services excluding housing, such as auto insurance, pet services and education.

NATION

FTX founder indicted on 8 charges

By KEN SWEET
Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. prosecutors charged Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder and former CEO of cryptocurrency exchange FTX, with a host of financial crimes and campaign finance violations on Tuesday, alleging he played a central role in the rapid collapse of FTX and hid its problems from the public and investors.

The indictment says Bankman-Fried allegedly committed a year-long fraud by diverting investors' funds to his private hedge fund and using the money to make venture investments, lavish real estate purchases and large political donations.

Bankman-Fried, who was arrested Monday by Bahamian authorities at the request of the U.S. government, was charged with eight counts, ranging from wire fraud to money laundering to conspiracy to commit fraud on the United States. He was also charged with making more than \$25,000 in illegal campaign contributions, a notable charge as Bankman-Fried was one of the largest political donors this year.

The indictment is on top of civil charges announced earlier Tuesday by the Securities and Exchange Commission, which also



JEENAH MOON/Bloomberg

Sam Bankman-Fried, founder and former CEO of cryptocurrency exchange FTX, was charged Tuesday with financial crimes and campaign finance violations.

alleged Bankman-Fried defrauded investors and used proceeds from investors to buy real estate on behalf of himself and family.

Along with the charges, U.S. authorities will seek to have Bankman-Fried forfeit all financial gains he might have received as part of the scheme. They are expected to request his extradition to the U.S., although the timing of that request is unclear. FTX filed

for bankruptcy on Nov. 11, when it ran out of money after the cryptocurrency equivalent of a bank run.

The maximum potential prison exposure from these charges is 115 years, according to Nicholas Biase, a prosecutors spokesperson.

Since FTX collapsed, Bankman-Fried has been holed up in his Bahamian luxury compound in Nassau. A spokesman for Bank-

man-Fried had no immediate comment on the charges Tuesday. He has a right to contest his extradition, which could delay but probably not stop his transfer to the U.S.

Bankman-Fried was one of the world's wealthiest people on paper; at one point his net worth reached \$26.5 billion, according to Forbes. He was a prominent personality in Washington, donating millions of dollars toward mostly left-leaning political causes and Democratic political campaigns, though he also gave money to Republicans. FTX grew to become the second-largest cryptocurrency exchange in the world.

That all unraveled quickly last month, when reports called into question the strength of FTX's balance sheet. Customers moved to withdraw billions of dollars, but FTX could not meet all the requests because it apparently had used its customers' deposits to fund investments at Bankman-Fried's trading arm, Alameda Research.

"We allege that Sam Bankman-Fried built a house of cards on a foundation of deception while telling investors that it was one of the safest buildings in crypto," said SEC Chair Gary Gensler.

The SEC complaint alleges that Bankman-Fried had raised more

than \$1.8 billion from equity investors since May 2019 by promoting FTX as a safe, responsible platform for trading crypto assets.

Instead, the complaint says, Bankman-Fried diverted customers' funds to Alameda Research without telling them.

"He then used Alameda as his personal piggy bank to buy luxury condominiums, support political campaigns, and make private investments, among other uses," the complaint reads. "None of this was disclosed to FTX equity investors or to the platform's trading customers."

Alameda did not segregate FTX investor funds and Alameda investments, the SEC said, using that money to "indiscriminately fund its trading operations," as well as other ventures of Bankman-Fried.

Bankman-Fried's arrest came just a day before he was due to testify in front of the House Financial Services Committee. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., chairwoman of the committee, said she was "disappointed" that the American public, and FTX's customers, would not get to see Bankman-Fried testify under oath.

That hearing, however, was to be held Tuesday, with the new CEO of FTX, John Ray III, giving testimony.

Supreme Court refuses request to stop Calif. flavored tobacco ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday refused a request from tobacco companies to stop California from enforcing a ban on flavored tobacco products that was overwhelmingly approved by voters in November.

R.J. Reynolds and other tobacco companies sought the high court's intervention to keep the ban from taking effect by Dec. 21.

There was no additional comment from the justices and no noted dissents.

The ban was first passed by the state legislature two years ago but it never took effect after tobacco companies gathered enough signatures to put it on the ballot. But nearly two-thirds of voters approved of banning the sale of everything from cotton-candy vaping juice to menthol cigarettes.

Supporters of the ban say the law was necessary to put a stop to a staggering rise in teen smoking.

R.J. Reynolds filed a federal lawsuit the day after the Nov. 8 vote, but lower courts refused to keep the law on hold while the suit proceeds.

Menthol cigarettes make up



JEFF CHIU/AP

Menthol cigarettes and other tobacco products are displayed at a store in San Francisco in 2018. The Supreme Court on Monday refused a request from tobacco companies to stop California from enforcing a ban on flavored tobacco products.

about a third of the market in California, the companies said in urging the Supreme Court to keep them from losing so much business in the nation's largest state.

They argued that the authority to ban flavored products rests with the federal Food and Drug Administration.

California responded that federal law comfortably allows state and local governments to decide which tobacco products are to be sold in their jurisdictions. And the state noted that the companies only went to the Supreme Court after spending "tens of millions of dollars" in a losing cause at the polls.

Twitter disbands Trust and Safety advisory group

Associated Press

Elon Musk's Twitter has dissolved its Trust and Safety Council, the advisory group of around 100 independent civil, human rights and other organizations that the company formed in 2016 to address hate speech, child exploitation, suicide, self-harm and other problems on the platform.

The council had been scheduled to meet with Twitter representatives Monday night. But Twitter informed the group via email that it was disbanding it shortly before the meeting was to take place, according to multiple members.

The council members, who provided images of the email from Twitter to The Associated Press, spoke on the condition of anonymity due to fears of retaliation. The email said Twitter was "reevaluating how best to bring external insights" and the council is "not the best structure to do this."

"Our work to make Twitter a safe, informative place will be

moving faster and more aggressively than ever before," said the email, which was signed "Twitter."

The volunteer group provided expertise and guidance on how Twitter could better combat hate, harassment and other harms but didn't have any decision-making authority and didn't review content disputes. Shortly after buying Twitter for \$44 billion in late October, Musk said he would form a new "content moderation council" to help make major decisions but later changed his mind.

"Twitter's Trust and Safety Council was a group of volunteers who over many years gave up their time when consulted by Twitter staff to offer advice on a wide range of online harms and safety issues," tweeted council member Alex Holmes. "At no point was it a governing body or decision making."

Twitter, which is based in San Francisco, had confirmed the meeting with the council Thursday in an email in which it promised an "open conversation and Q&A" with Twitter staff, including the new head of trust and safety, Ella Irwin.



Musk

NATION

US can't seek death penalty in Lockerbie case

The Washington Post

Prosecutors said in federal court Monday that the law does not allow them to seek the death penalty for the former Libyan intelligence officer charged with building the bomb that destroyed a passenger plane flying over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, killing 270 people, including 190 Americans.

Abu Agila Mohammad Mas'ud Kheir al-Marimi, 71, made his first appearance in U.S. District Court in Washington on Monday afternoon, a day after U.S. authorities announced that they had extradited him. He would be the first person prosecuted in the United States in connection with the attack 34 years ago.

The Justice Department years ago charged two other men in connection with the killings, but Libyan officials never agreed to allow them to appear in an American courtroom. Instead, they were prosecuted by a Scottish court. Officials so far have declined to say what agreement they struck with Libya to bring Mas'ud to the United States.

ed States.

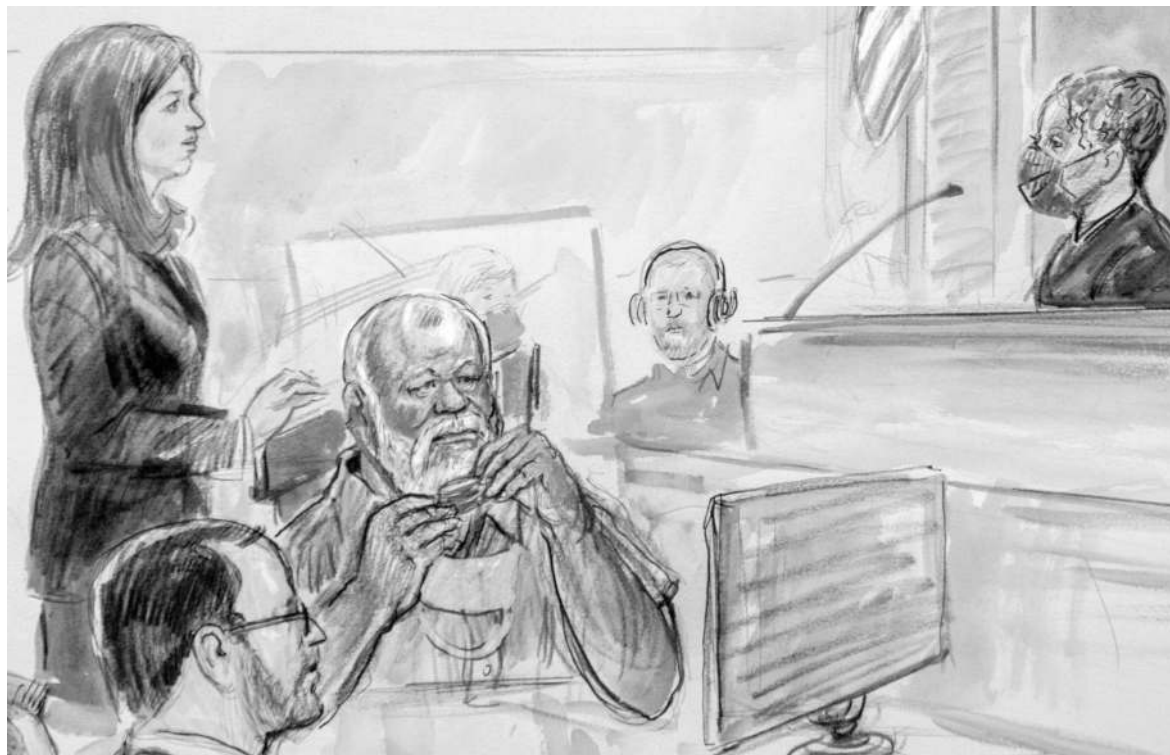
Mas'ud faces two different criminal charges, including destruction of an aircraft resulting in death. He could be sentenced to life in prison. Prosecutors told Magistrate Judge Robin M. Meriweather that while the charges Mas'ud faces now are punishable by death, they were not eligible for the death penalty in 1988.

Mas'ud, who was born in Tunisia and also holds Libyan citizenship, appeared with a public defender, limping into the courtroom wearing a green jail jumpsuit. Relatives of victims killed in the bombing were present.

Speaking in Arabic through an interpreter, he told the judge that he had the flu and was taking medication, and that he wanted to obtain his own lawyer but had not yet done so. "I cannot talk before I have my attorney," Mas'ud said.

Meriweather agreed to delay the detention hearing until Dec. 27.

Until Sept. 11, 2001, the bombing of the Boeing 747 was the largest



DANA VERKOUTEREN/AP

The artist sketch depicts Assistant U.S. Attorney Erik Kenerson, front left, watching as Whitney Minter, a public defender from the eastern division of Virginia, stands to represent Abu Agila Mohammad Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi, accused of making the bomb that brought down Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, in federal court in Washington, on Monday.

terrorist attack against U.S. civilians in history. It led to sanctions against Libya and helped shape the FBI's handling of international investigations.

In 1991, Libyan intelligence operative Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and his alleged accomplice Lamem Khalifa Fhimah were charged in the Lockerbie bombing. Libya initially refused to send them to the United States or Britain for trial, instead handing them over in 1999 for trial by a Scottish court on a former U.S.

military base in the Netherlands. Fhimah was acquitted, while Megrahi was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Megrahi died in 2012, about three years after being released from prison with a cancer diagnosis.

Mas'ud was charged years later, after the FBI obtained a copy of a 2012 interview of him by a Libyan law enforcement officer.

According to the U.S. affidavit filed in support of the criminal case, Mas'ud admitted making the bomb that took down the plane

and assisting Megrahi and Fhimah in executing the plot.

Mas'ud has been in Libyan custody in an unrelated case.

State Department spokesman Ned Price declined to give details Monday of what led to his transfer to the United States. "It is safe to say that this happened in consultation with appropriate Libyan authorities and the United States is in regular contact and discussion with our Libyan counterparts, but I would need to leave it at that," Price told reporters at a briefing.

China casts long shadow over US-Africa Leaders Summit

BY AAMER MADHANI
AND LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With dozens of African leaders descending on Washington this week, the Biden administration is offering a not-so-subtle pitch in its economic competition with China on the continent: The U.S. offers a better option to African partners.

Ahead of Tuesday's start of the three-day U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, Deputy Commerce Secretary Don Graves acknowledged that the U.S. has fallen behind as China has surged past American foreign direct investment in Africa but argued that the U.S. remains the "partner of choice" in Africa.

"We took our eye off the ball so to speak, and U.S. investors and companies are having to play catch up," Graves said at an event hosted by the news outlet Semafor.

He added, "We're bringing the best technologies and innovations, the highest standards.... The U.S. helps to build capacity in our partner countries as opposed to exploiting those countries."



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks during the U.S.-Africa leaders Summit at Department of State in Washington, on Monday.

Heads of states from 49 African nations and the African Union have been invited to take part in the summit that has been billed as an opportunity for President Joe Biden's administration to re-engage the continent's leaders.

The continent, whose leaders often feel they've been given short shrift by leading economies, re-

mains crucial to global powers because of its rapidly growing population, significant natural resources, and a sizable voting bloc in the United Nations. Africa remains of great strategic importance as the U.S. recalibrates its foreign policy with greater focus on China — what the Biden administration sees as the United

States' most significant economic and military adversary.

Even before the summit officially began, the White House announced Biden's support for the African Union becoming a permanent member of the Group of 20 nations and that it had appointed Johnnie Carson, a well-regarded veteran diplomat, to serve as point person for implementing initiatives that come out of the summit.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Monday also said that the administration would commit to spending \$55 billion in Africa over the next three years on "a wide range of sectors to tackle the core challenges of our time."

"If you compare what the United States is committing over the next three years to what any other country is committing, I think we stack up extremely favorably," Sullivan said.

And while the administration has tried to minimize concerns about China's deepening presence on the continent as a driving force at this week's talks, Beijing's shadow over the biggest international gathering in Washington

since the start of the pandemic nearly three years ago looms large.

Without direct mention of China, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo on Monday sounded the alarm about petering private investment in middle- and low-income countries, particularly in Africa.

The Biden administration, as it addresses criticism that Africa has remained an afterthought in U.S. foreign policy, has taken veiled jabs at China.

During his visit to Nigeria last year, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that "too often, international infrastructure deals are opaque, coercive" and "burden countries with unmanageable debt."

China's ambassador to the U.S., Qin Gang, pushed back on Monday against the Chinese debt trap notion and made the case that China has long been "sincere" in approaching Africa as the vibrant emerging market of the future.

"We are not interested in the views of any other countries on China's role in Africa," Qin said at the Semafor forum.

WORLD

Chinese citizens urged to leave after Kabul hit

By RAHIM FAIEZ
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — China on Tuesday advised its citizens in Afghanistan to leave the country “as soon as possible,” following a coordinated attack by Islamic State militants the previous day on a Chinese-owned hotel in the heart of Kabul.

The Chinese advisory appeared to be a setback for Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers who seek foreign investments in hopes of halting the downward spiral of the Afghan economy since their takeover of the country more than a year ago.

The militant ISIS — a key rival of the Taliban — claimed responsibility for the attack Monday afternoon on Kabul Longan Hotel, which left three assailants dead and at least two hotel guests injured as they tried to escape by jumping out of a window.

Plumes of smoke rose from the 10-story building in the central Shar-e Naw neighborhood, according to images posted on social media as the attack unfolded. Residents reported explosions and gunfire. Taliban forces rushed to the area and blocked all roads leading to the site. Khalid Zadran, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the attack lasted several hours, followed by a clean-up operation.

On Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin called the attack “egregious in nature” and said China



SIDDIQULLAH KHAN/AP

An attack on a Chinese-owned hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday spurred China to advise its citizens to leave the country.

was “deeply shocked.”

Beijing demanded a “thorough investigation” and urged the Taliban government “to take resolute and strong measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects in Afghanistan,” Wang said.

The Chinese Embassy in Kabul sent its team to the site to help with the rescue, treatment and accommodations for the victims of the attack, Wang added.

“In view of the current security situation in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs once again advised Chinese citizens and institutions in Afghanistan to evacuate from Afghanistan as soon as possible,” Wang said.



Ng Han Guan/AP

Passengers pass near a flight departure board in a Capital airport terminal in Beijing, on Tuesday.

Some students OK to study from home amid COVID fears in China

Associated Press

BEIJING — Some Chinese universities say they will allow students to finish the semester from home in hopes of reducing the potential of a bigger COVID-19 outbreak during the January Lunar New Year travel rush.

It wasn’t clear how many schools were taking part, but universities in Shanghai and nearby cities said students would be given the option of either returning home early or staying on campus and undergoing testing every 48 hours. The Lunar New Year, which falls on Jan. 22 this year, is traditionally China’s busiest travel season.

Universities have been the scene of frequent lockdowns over the past three years, occasionally leading to clashes between the au-

thorities and students confined to campus or even their dorm rooms.

Tuesday’s announcements came as China begins relaxing its strict “zero-COVID” policy, allowing people with mild symptoms to stay home rather than be sent to a quarantine center, among other changes that followed widespread protests.

Starting from Tuesday, China has stopped tracking some travel, potentially reducing the likelihood people will be forced into quarantine for visiting COVID-19 hot spots. Despite that, China’s international borders remain largely shut and there has been no word on when restrictions on inbound travelers and Chinese wishing to go overseas will be eased.

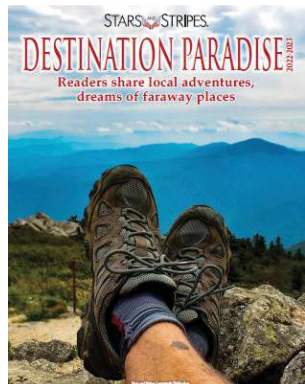
The move follows the government’s dramatic announcement

last week that it was ending many of the strictest measures, following three years during which it enforced some of the world’s tightest virus restrictions.

While met with relief, the relaxation has also sparked concerns about a new wave of infections potentially overwhelming health care resources in some areas.

With so many people staying home, Beijing’s downtown streets were eerily quiet on Tuesday. Small lines formed outside fever clinics — the number of which has recently increased from 94 to 303 — and at pharmacies, where cold and flu medications have become harder to find.

Many residents of mainland China have taken to ordering medication from pharmacies in Hong Kong.



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WORLD

India says soldiers hurt in latest clash with Chinese

The Washington Post
NEW DELHI — Indian and Chinese troops have clashed in recent days, resulting in injuries, the Indian army said Monday, marking the most serious incident along their contested mountainous border since soldiers from the two giant nations were killed and captured in June 2020.

On Dec. 9, People's Liberation Army soldiers approached the notional border in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, a state in far northeastern India claimed by China, leading to a faceoff and "minor injuries to few personnel from both sides," the Indian army said in a statement. The statement added that both sides quickly withdrew from the area and local commanders met to discuss the dispute.

Appearing before the Indian parliament Tuesday, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh accused Chinese troops of crossing into Indian territory and "disrupting the status quo unilaterally." Singh said the two sides were engaged in hand-to-hand combat and no Indians were killed or seriously

wounded. He did not give details about what had happened or how many soldiers were involved in the confrontation.

When asked about India's allegations on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters that he had no details. He said that, in general, the border situation was "stable."

"The two sides have always maintained smooth communication on border-related issues through diplomatic and military channels," Wang said at a daily press briefing in Beijing.

For decades, India and China have had numerous overlapping claims along their 2,100-mile border, which stretches across nearly the entire Himalayan range. In 1962, when the countries fought a bloody, high-altitude war over the contested territories, China seized Arunachal Pradesh, which it claims as part of South Tibet, before returning it to Indian control.

In recent years, soldiers from both sides have patrolled up to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which serves as a notional border.

Putin ditches news conference

Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin has ditched his annual marathon news conference following a series of battlefield setbacks in Ukraine — a tacit acknowledgment that the Russian leader's war has gone badly wrong.

Putin typically uses the year-end ritual to polish his image, answering a wide range of questions on domestic and foreign policy to demonstrate his grip on details and give the semblance of openness even though the event is tightly stage-managed.

But this year, with his troops on the back foot in Ukraine, it could be impossible to avoid uncomfortable questions about the Russian military's blunders even at a highly choreographed event. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed Monday that Putin wouldn't hold the news conference this month without explaining why.

"Although questions are almost certainly usually vetted in advance, the cancellation is likely due to increasing concerns about the prevalence of anti-war feeling

in Russia," the U.K. Defense Ministry wrote in a commentary on Twitter.

"Kremlin officials are almost certainly extremely sensitive about the possibility that any event attended by Putin could be hijacked by unsanctioned discussion about the 'special military operation,'" it said, using Moscow's term for the war.



Putin

Some of his previous performances lasted for more than 4½ hours, during which he has sometimes faced some pointed questions, but used them to mock the West or denigrate his domestic opponents.

Putin also has canceled another annual fixture this year, a televised call-in show in which he takes questions from the public to nurture his father-of-the-nation image.

And he has so far failed to deliver the annual televised state-of-the-nation address to parliament,

a constitutional obligation. No date has been set for Putin's address.

The Kremlin has muzzled any criticism of its invasion of Ukraine from the liberal anti-war camp, shutting independent media outlets and criminalizing the spread of any information that differs from the official view — including calling the campaign a war. But it has faced an increasingly vocal criticism from Russian hardliners, who have denounced the president as weak and indecisive and called for ramping up strikes on Ukraine.

Political analyst Abbas Gallyamov said in a video commentary that the decision not to hold the news conference was likely because Putin "has nothing to say from the point of view of strategy."

Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, claiming Moscow was forced to "demilitarize" the country in the face of NATO's refusal to offer Russia guarantees that Ukraine wouldn't be invited to join the alliance. Ukraine and much of the world denounced the Russian attack on its neighbor as an unprovoked act of aggression.

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market




Transportation
944

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

300 skiing Santa Clauses, Grinch, tree hit the slopes

ME NEWRY — A bunch of Santa lookalikes took to the ski slopes to spread some seasonal cheer.

More than 300 jolly ol' elves — all dressed in red — dashed together down a mountain with white beards and Santa hats flapping in the breeze at the Sunday River ski resort in Maine. A skiing Grinch and a skiing Christmas tree joined the party.

It wasn't exactly a winter wonderland — there was little natural snow. The snow-making machines at Sunday River produced enough of the fluffy stuff for the annual tradition. Santa Sunday has grown in popularity over more than two decades, raising \$7,500 this year for a local charity.

Rogue iguana causes widespread power outage

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Iguanas are skilled saboteurs when it comes to the electric grid, a power outage in Lake Worth Beach revealed.

A large green iguana ended up on a transformer at the city's Sixth Avenue substation, causing over 1,400 customers in the area east of Dixie Highway and south of Lake Avenue to lose power for about 35 minutes, the time it took for a team from the city, which provides its own utilities, to arrive on scene with safety equipment and extricate the reptile before starting the system up again. The iguana died.

"Nothing is going to survive that situation," said Ben Kerr, a spokesperson for the city of Lake Worth Beach who lives a block away from the affected area. "The pictures are horrible every time this happens."

It happens frequently. So much so that the city has instituted several "hardening" measures to protect critical infrastructure from iguanas, such as making utility poles more difficult to climb.

Over 200 guns collected at city's buyback event

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Community organizers in Albuquerque said they have collected more than 200 unwanted guns at the latest buyback event.

It was the event's 17th year and organizers said their goal is to help curb gun violence across the region.

Of the guns collected, 18 were assault rifles.

People traded in guns for a gift card.

"We ran out of cards after the first two hours. We went through \$26,000 worth of cards," Miranda Viscoli, co-president of New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence, told Albuquerque TV station KOB. "We ran out and people were still showing up with guns and they say, 'I don't care about



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Skiers dressed in Santa Claus outfits hit the slopes for charity Sunday at the Sunday River Ski Resort in Newry, Maine.

the gift card. I just don't want to have this gun in my home anymore."

Organizers said they plan to donate the dismantled guns to an Albuquerque charter school where students will learn how to forge the parts into gardening tools.

State sues gun shop over high-capacity mag sales

WA SEATTLE — Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson is suing a Federal Way gun shop, saying it unlawfully sold high-capacity magazines to investigators during a compliance operation.

Federal Way Discount Guns was one of just two gun stores — out of 25 tested across the state — that failed to comply with the law, Ferguson said. The store did not immediately return an email from The Associated Press seeking comment.

According to the attorney general's office, investigators visited Federal Way Discount Guns four times from August to November, observing a wall of high-capacity magazines for sale. A clerk or the store's owner, Mohammed Reza Baghai, sold investigators nine such magazines — including a 50-round drum magazine, two 30-round magazines for an AR-15 style rifle and a 33-round magazine for a Glock 17 pistol, Ferguson said.

During each sale, a store representative destroyed the record of

sale or made comments suggesting they knew the sale was illegal, he said.

12-year-old boy charged with murder in fatal crash

TX DALLAS — A 12-year-old boy has been arrested and charged with murder in a hit-and-run car crash that killed an 82-year-old woman last month, Dallas police said.

Police said the boy was behind the wheel of a gray sedan that struck Florence Kelly as she was driving in north Dallas. Police did not identify the child by name.

Kelly's car was struck by the speeding Toyota Avalon as she was pulling into an intersection on her way to get groceries, according to WFAA-TV. Kelly was taken to a hospital after the crash and died of her injuries.

Doorbell-camera footage released by investigators showed a group of people leaving the Toyota after the crash. Kelly's daughter, Rebekka Kelly, told the Dallas television station that the group did not call 911 after the collision.

Ex-warden convicted of sexually abusing inmates

CA DUBLIN — The former warden of a federal women's prison in California where inmates said they were subjected to rampant sexual abuse was convicted of molesting inmates and forcing them to pose naked in their cells.

Ray Garcia was found guilty of all eight charges and faces up to 15 years in prison. He was among five workers charged with abusing inmates at the federal correctional institution in Dublin, Calif., and the first to go to trial.

Garcia, 55, retired from his post last year after the FBI found nude photos of inmates on his government-issued phone. Garcia was charged with abusing three inmates between December 2019 and July 2021.

"Instead of ensuring the proper functioning of FCI Dublin, he used his authority to sexually prey upon multiple female inmates under his control," U.S. Attorney Stephanie Hinds said, calling Garcia's crimes a betrayal of the public trust and his obligations as a warden.

13 kids, 3 adults hurt in church bus accident

TX HOUSTON — Sixteen people, including 13 children, were injured after a small church bus overturned near a Houston area apartment complex, according to authorities.

The bus, belonging to a Baptist church, rolled over and landed on its side after the driver tried to make a left turn in a northeast Harris County neighborhood, said Lt. Simon Cheng, with the county's sheriff's office.

Witnesses from an apartment complex told investigators the bus

appeared to be speeding, Cheng said.

The 16 people on board the bus — 13 children and three adults — were taken to hospitals. The children were between the ages of 1 and 16.

It's believed that the injuries were not life-threatening, Cheng said.

It's unclear how fast the driver was going, but the speed limit on the road was 30 mph, Cheng said.

The driver is likely to be issued a citation but investigators are still determining if any charges could be filed in the case, Cheng said.

National park finishes rules for air tours

TN GATLINBURG — Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials said they have finished a plan that establishes rules for touring the park by air.

A news release said the plan allows up to 946 air tours annually on six routes over the park and up to a half-mile outside the park's boundary at an altitude above 2,600 feet.

The park averaged 946 air tours annually from 2017 to 2019.

Park officials said commercial air tours have flown over the Smokies for years without defined operating parameters.

The requirements begin within 90 days of the plan's signing.

FACES



SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES/AP

Colin Farrell is shown in a scene from "The Banshees of Inisherin." The film about feuding friends, which scored eight Golden Globe nominations Monday, comes to video on demand this week.

New this week: 'Banshees,' Whitney Houston compilation

Associated Press

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

■ In "The Banshees of Inisherin," director Martin McDonagh reteams with Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, the stars of the playwright's feature debut, 2008's "In Bruges." The results are just as good. On a small island off the west coast of Ireland in 1923, they play longtime pals whose friendship abruptly and a little mysteriously comes to an end. Farrell and Gleeson have already won awards for their performances. It's still playing in theaters but on Tuesday it reached video on demand.

■ Nikyatu Jusu makes one of the more arresting directorial debuts of the year in Amazon Studios' "Nanny." The grand jury prize-winner of the Sundance Film Festival, "Nanny" stars Anna Diop as Aisha, a well-educated Senegalese caregiver for a white New York family. (Michelle Monaghan co-stars.) Aisha's own daughter remains in Africa. She sends home money while her wealthy employers casually take advantage of her kindness. Jusu uses the dark atmosphere of a horror film to convey the dread and displacement of the immigrant experience. It streams Friday on Amazon Prime Video.

■ The masterful Korean director Park Chan-wook is best known for genre extremes like "Oldboy" and "The Handmaiden." In his prize-winning latest, "Decision to Leave," he conjures a more subtly beguiling tale, a slinky fusion of police procedural and romance. The film, which began streaming on MUBI on Dec. 9, stars Park Hae-il as a Busan detective who becomes infatuated by the suspect (Tang Wei) of a murder investigation.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Music

■ Rapper Ab-Soul returns with "Herbert" on Friday, his first full-length studio album in six years and a follow-up to "Do What Thou Wilt." Singles include "Do Better," and "Gang'Nem," which features Fre\$h. The set will also feature Big Sean, Russ, Joey Bada\$\$, Jhené Aiko, SiR, Punch, Zacari, Fre\$h, Ambré, ALEMEDA and Lance Skiiwalker. The record

is described as "a deliberately intimate portrait of the man behind Ab-Soul going back to his foundation." It's a collection that shows off his impressive range, including the playful, busy old school hip-hop vibe of "No Report Card" to the slow, airy jazz of "Bucket."

■ A week before the movie release of the Whitney Houston biopic "I Wanna Dance With Somebody," comes an album with 35 tracks that includes a never-before-released a cappella live recording of "Don't Cry For Me." Houston recorded it in 1994 while on The Bodyguard World Tour, flying back to perform it at an AIDS benefit concert. The song and an original re-imagined version of it by producer Sam Feldt is also included on "I Wanna Dance With Somebody," out on Friday. The movie hits theaters Dec. 23.

■ Brazilian global pop superstar Anitta will perform as part of the new weekly concert series Amazon Music Live streaming live Thursday night. Anitta, a best new artist Grammy nominee, joins a list of performers who have done the concerts, including Kane Brown, Lil Baby and Megan Thee Stallion. They are hosted by Grammy-winning hip-hop star 2 Chainz and air on Prime Video and the Amazon Music channel on Twitch. Anitta mixes Latin pop, R&B and reggaeton and has already landed six Latin Grammy nominations throughout the years.

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

Television

■ David Letterman traveled to Kyiv to sit down with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for a one-off episode of Netflix's "My Next Guest," which debuted Monday. "I've never done anything quite like this," says Letterman in a clip as he descends on an escalator 300 feet below ground. The conversation was recorded in October on a subway platform-turned-stage, complete with a small audience.

■ Rising comedian Atsuko Okatsuka debuted her first HBO comedy special called "The Intruder" on Saturday. Okatsuka is wrapping up an exciting 2022 where she headlined her first national solo tour and made her late-night talk show debut on "The Late Late Show" with James Corden. She also started the viral #dropchallenge with her grandmother on TikTok (where one slowly squats to Beyoncé's song "Yoncé" while staring into camera), which has received more than 10 million views.

— Alicia Rancilio

BTS member Jin enters boot camp

BY HYUNG-JIN KIM
AND JUWON PARK
Associated Press

YEONCHEON, South Korea — Jin, the oldest member of K-pop supergroup BTS, began his 18 months of mandatory military service at a front-line South Korean boot camp Tuesday as fans gathered near the base to say goodbye.

Six other younger BTS members are to join the military in coming years one after another, meaning that the world's biggest boy band must take a hiatus, likely for a few years. Their enlistments have prompted a fierce domestic debate over whether it's time to revise the country's conscription system to expand exemptions to include prominent entertainers like BTS, or not to provide such benefits to anyone.

With lawmakers squabbling at Parliament and surveys showing sharply split public opinions over offering exemptions to BTS members, their management agency said in October that all BTS members would perform their compulsory military duties. Big Hit Music said that both the company and the members of BTS "are looking forward to reconvening as a group again around 2025 following their service commitment."

Jin, who turned 30 this month, entered the boot camp at Yeoncheon, a town near the tense border with North Korea, for five weeks of basic training together with other new conscript soldiers, the Defense Ministry said. After the training involving rifle shooting, grenade throwing and marching practices, he and other conscripts would be assigned to army



JIN/AP

Jin shows off freshly shaved hair Sunday on the K-pop social media platform Weverse. The oldest member of the band BTS began 18 months of mandatory military service Tuesday.

units across the country.

About 20-30 fans — some holding Jin's photos — and dozens of journalists gathered near the camp. Jin didn't meet them as a vehicle carrying him moved into the camp.

Authorities mobilized 300 police officers, soldiers, emergency workers and others to maintain order and guard against any accidents, according to the army. Strict safety steps were expected as South Korea is still reeling from the Halloween crush in October in Seoul that killed 158 people.

Hours before entering the camp, Jin — whose real name is Kim Seok-jin — wrote on the online fan platform Weverse that "It's time for a curtain call." He posted a photo of himself Sunday with a military buzzcut and a message saying, "Ha ha ha. It's cuter than I had expected."

Nolan's 'Oppenheimer' IMAX trailer will get splashy rollout with 'Avatar 2'

Associated Press

Christopher Nolan is ready to show the world the first full-length trailer for his new epic "Oppenheimer," and he's doing so in the splashiest way possible: With an exclusive IMAX spot in front of "Avatar: The Way of Water."

The "Oppenheimer" trailer will debut globally on IMAX screens playing the "Avatar" sequel, which begins its theatrical run Thursday. It will not be made available online and is distinct from the trailer that will show on non-IMAX screens.

Nolan's film, about the enigmatic, Harvard-educated theoretical physicist who helped develop the first atomic bomb, is based on Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography

"American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer," and stars Cillian Murphy in the title role. The thriller explores the paradox of the man who infamously called himself the "destroyer of worlds."

Universal Pictures plans to release "Oppenheimer" exclusively in theaters on July 21.

Other news

■ Angelo Badalamenti, the composer best known for creating otherworldly scores for many David Lynch productions, from "Blue Velvet" and "Twin Peaks" to "Mulholland Drive," has died. He was 85. His family says in a statement issued Monday that Badalamenti died of natural causes on Sunday.

STARS AND STRIPES

OPINION

Guarding (other) coasts: Reining in the Coast Guard

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BY ANDREW C. JAROCKI

Special to Stars and Stripes

Surprised by the arrival of a heavily armed American vessel, Chinese boats surreptitiously fishing for squid near Ecuador this past summer fled in a panic. Meanwhile, Nigerian sailors received American training on combating piracy and an American cutter seized millions of dollars' worth of heroin from a smuggler in the Gulf of Oman.

A busy summer for the U.S. Navy? No. The U.S. Marine Corps at work? Nope.

The U.S. Coast Guard is increasingly operating far from American coasts and undertaking missions quite different from more well-known ones like rescuing swimmers or aiding in ecological disasters. The "Coasties" are pushing hard to be seen as a tool for confronting geopolitical rivals and accomplishing foreign policy objectives in any waters of the planet.

A globe-trotting USCG is dangerous for both foreign and domestic reasons. Internationally, the use of the Coast Guard in areas distant from American coasts and lacking obvious American sovereignty interests risks needless tension and establishes an undesirable precedent.

At home, allowing the Guard to justify larger budget requests by expanding its mission further encourages military branches to inflate threats or invent questionable new missions in the fierce competition for funding.

Housed within the Department of Homeland Security in peace time, the Coast Guard's diverse list of statutory missions ranges from migrant interdiction to icebreaking. It also includes a lesser-known charge to support Department of Defense homeland defense operations.

The Coast Guard has certainly leaned into this role. USCG vessels supported the Pentagon a total of 326 days in 2019, a noticeable jump from between 50 to 100 days during the previous five years. Unfortunately, the Coast Guard's DOD collaborations increasingly include missions without a clear tie to homeland security.

In May 2021, USCG Maui fired 30 "warning shots" at an Iranian fast boat while accompanying U.S. Navy ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Just months later, USCG Munro tagged along on a tense transit of the Taiwan Strait. In the interim, the USCG Hamilton exercised with the Ukrainian navy in the Black Sea.

America's use of a primarily domestic security force in these far-flung and hotly contested areas risks worsening tough diplomatic situations. Coast Guard operations like these have elicited furious reactions from Iran and China amid already strained relations with both.

Some have argued that the Coast Guard is better suited to conduct overseas missions like freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) because a USCG cutter is less threatening than a U.S. Navy warship. But how would the United States react if other nations attempted this with their coast guards in American waters? Would Washington be any less alarmed if the Chinese and Russian ships that entered the American exclusive economic zone of the Bering Sea in September were "only" coast guard vessels? Of course not, so America would be wise not to establish that invasive precedent with its own Coast Guard.

Even if it doesn't make strategic sense, there is an understandable bureaucratic logic to the Coast Guard's pursuit of these missions. The other military branches under-

stand well that the more relevant they seem to the strategic issue of the day, the more responsibilities (and therefore money from Congress) they can expect.

Coast Guard boosters have seized on the return of great power competition to argue for forward deployment to Japan and a dramatically increased budget for new missions to counter China. Others propose that the Guard become the preeminent service for maritime FONOPs throughout the entire Pacific. Expanded Russian activity in the Arctic is often cited in arguments for new polar icebreakers whose costs could run into the billions of dollars and add another suite of missions for the USCG in the High North.

Lawmakers should be wary. From illegal fishing in South America and drug smugglers in the Middle East to African pirates and Russians prowling the North Pole, there will always be plenty of monsters abroad that America could seek out with the Coast Guard. This temptation is especially strong for a military branch when such mission creep is rewarded with institutional prestige and dollars.

However, the Coast Guard is first and foremost an instrument for American homeland defense. Narrowly defining this goal and ensuring that the Coast Guard remains focused on it will avoid the risk of international escalation or retribution. Most importantly, reining in the Coast Guard's push to intervene all over the map might just be the first step to restoring some prudence to the other services' operations too.

Andrew C. Jarocki is a master's student at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. He formerly served as the editor-in-chief of Realist Review, and his work has appeared in Defense News, The National Interest and Responsible Statecraft.

Vets, your next act of service could be in the classroom

BY RYAN PAVEL

Special to Stars and Stripes

"The time is short; the need is great." A mentor shared these words with me when I started teaching, and I have yet to find something that better encapsulates my classroom experience.

I've had some tough jobs. I spent five years in the Marine Corps and deployed a couple of times to Iraq, working as an Arabic translator. I also dabbled in corporate litigation before finding my calling leading a nonprofit that equips veterans for success in college. Nothing I have done compares to the two years I spent as a Teach For America corps member.

Every year, roughly 200,000 service members separate from the military, many searching for that next purpose-driven pursuit. What if more of them stepped into the 300,000 unfilled jobs in schools across the country, whether through alternative certification or traditional degree paths? What better act of continued service than to meet the challenges of teaching head on?

Stereotypes of veterans can be deeply problematic—I cringe every time I hear someone refer to all veterans as heroes or victims of post-traumatic stress—but there are some commonalities that make veterans well equipped for classroom service. The vast majority of us have had to develop resiliency from our time in the military, frequently dealing with less than ideal resources to accomplish the mission, often by developing inventive solutions and relying on teamwork to get the job

done.

I had to put all of this to work in the classroom. After earning my degree, I was eager to find a job where I could continue to serve and make a meaningful impact. The TFA mission of serving alongside diverse leaders to end educational inequity resonated deeply with me, so it was an easy decision to apply.

A few months later, fresh out of intensive summer training in instructional design and classroom management, I gave a reading assessment to my ninth graders to start the year. The results left me speechless. Of the roughly 30 students in the class, the average reading level was between the fourth and fifth grade, with some students testing at the kindergarten range and a couple as high as grade 12.

I had little time to stop and regroup; the bell rang, one group of students left, and seemingly seconds later the next group arrived. When the school days were extended and summer break canceled to carve out more instructional time, the lines from one year to the next blurred together. But my students and I persevered, and they made steady improvements in reading and writing throughout our time together.

I had underestimated both the need and the challenges of teaching. Part of the pressure comes from internalizing how much the work really matters. My students didn't have time for me to figure out how to teach; they just needed me to do it. If I did a lackluster job, that wouldn't just reflect negatively in a performance review, it would tangibly and directly affect the lives of over 100 young adults.

While I am proud that I completed my two-year teaching commitment, the experience gave me enormous, lifelong respect for teachers who are in it for the long haul. Teaching is an undervalued and under-resourced profession. The formal training I received in the classroom was essential, but so too was the mentorship I received from the experienced teachers to my left and my right who invested time to help make me effective. I wouldn't have made it without them.

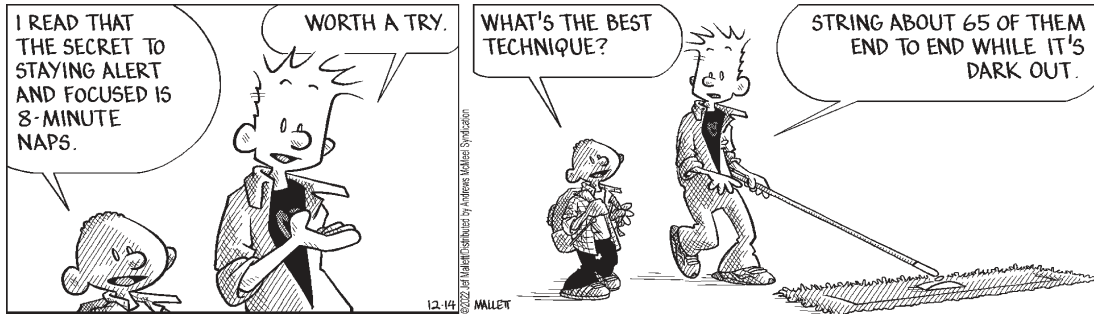
I also gained vital perspective on the education system and the deep inequalities in our country. Those perspectives continually inform my current work with veterans in higher education.

To be clear, I am not saying that veterans are automatically qualified to teach just by virtue of their military service. A bachelor's degree, initial teaching certification, and rigorous training should always be prerequisites to teach. But there are programs that can help, like Warrior-Scholar Project for degree completion and Teach For America and Troops to Teachers for alternative certification.

The thing about enormous need is that there is also enormous opportunity for impact. We're in a defining moment for our education system, and I hope my fellow veterans rise to the occasion.

Ryan Pavel, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, serves as Warrior-Scholar Project's chief executive officer and as the vice president of partnerships of the Veterans Leadership Council, a working group lead of the Bush Institute's Veteran Higher Education Task Force, and council member of the Teach for America Military Veteran Council.

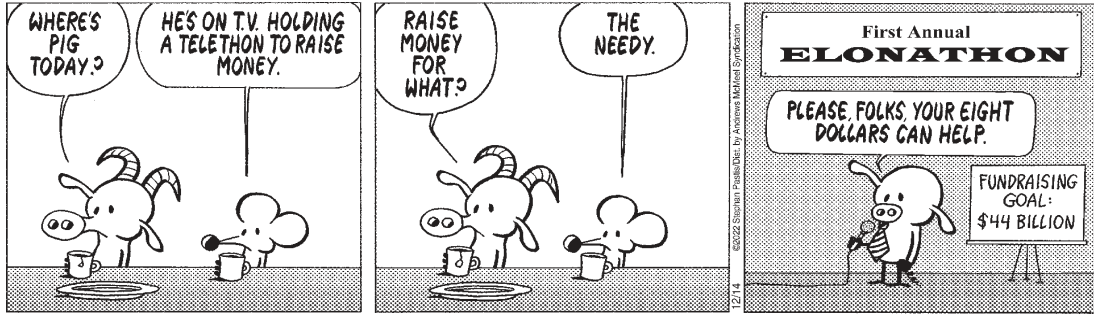
Frazz



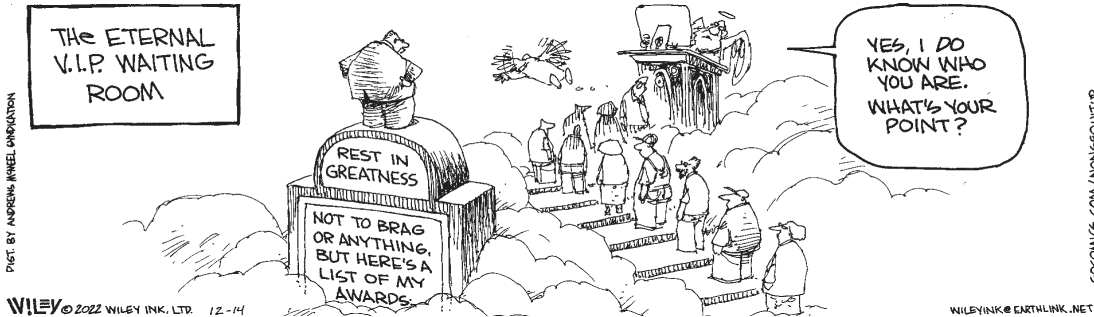
Dilbert



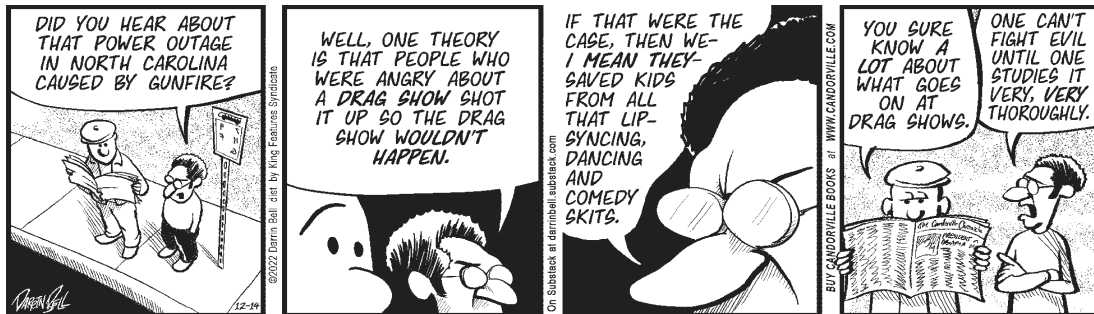
Pearls Before Swine



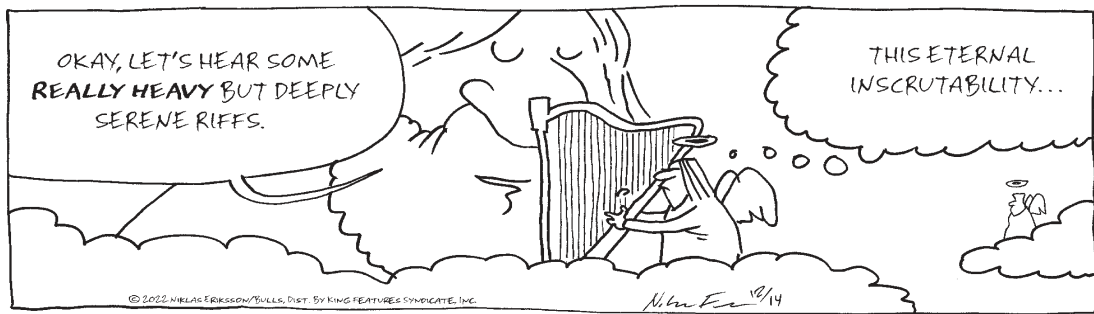
Non Sequitur



Candorville



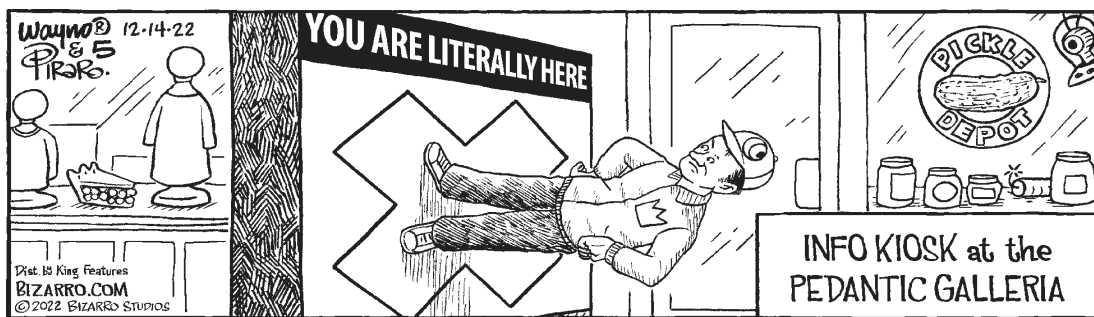
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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

ACROSS

- 1 Audubon subject
- 5 Dog's foot
- 8 Early TVs
- 12 Poet Khayyám
- 13 Promising words?
- 14 Close
- 15 Editing site for news stories
- 17 "La Dolce —"
- 18 Caper
- 19 Hire
- 21 Pisa farewell
- 24 CBS forensic drama
- 25 Spiked club
- 28 "Peter Pan" pooch
- 30 Pop
- 33 Hit show letters
- 34 Stopwatch button
- 35 Flamenco cheer
- 36 Baseball's Hodges
- 37 Ornamental jug
- 38 End-of-wk. cry
- 39 Apply cream
- 41 Fly like a hawk
- 43 Curtain fabric
- 46 Bob Marley fan, often
- 50 Border on
- 51 "Cool it!"
- 54 Places
- 55 Candle count
- 56 Redact
- 57 Youngster

- 58 Fluffy neckpiece
- 59 Swift jets

- 25 Food additive
- 26 "Entourage" agent
- 27 Sparkling wine
- 29 Octavia's spouse
- 31 Frazier foe
- 32 Dict. info
- 34 C&W artist McEntire
- 38 Swaps
- 40 "The Sopranos" restaurateur
- 42 Branch
- 43 Beer ingredient
- 44 Beyoncé's "If I Were —"
- 45 Wound cover
- 47 Freshens lawns
- 48 Ninny
- 49 Picnic intruders
- 52 Past
- 53 Tony winner

DOWN

- 1 — Raton
- 2 "— a roll!"
- 3 En-grossed
- 4 Overnight-package cooler
- 5 Chart format
- 6 Billboards
- 7 Stirred
- 8 Answers an invitation
- 9 Spicy ball-park frank
- 10 Car
- 11 Remain
- 16 601, in old Rome
- 20 Future doc's exam
- 22 Fresh
- 23 Caravan stops

Answer to Previous Puzzle

W	I	G	S		R	E	A		E	A	S	T	
E	D	N	A		E	A	R		A	M	E	S	
B	O	U	T	I	Q	U	E		G	O	R	P	
				I	D	S		A	D	L	I	B	S
S	C	E	N	E		B	R	I	E				
C	O	T	Y		B	O	U	N	T	I	E	S	
A	C	T		A	R	E	G	O		D	A	H	
B	O	U	L	D	E	R	S		A	E	R	O	
			L	E	A	S		D	R	A	P	E	
B	Y	H	A	N	D		N	E	T				
R	O	A	M		B	O	U	F	F	A	N	T	
A	G	U	A		O	N	T		U	R	I	S	
G	A	L	S		X	E	S		L	A	N	E	

12-14

CRYPTOQUIP

UCQM R CSBXQ DBSWQX
 WFEVSBFSZX FM RNN VCBQQ
 VBFDNQ EBSUM BREQX, FV'X R
 UFM-UFM-UFM XFVZRVFSM.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT IS A STORAGE SITE CONTAINING CRATES FULL OF SMALL ITEMS FOR HOMES? A HOUSEWARE WAREHOUSE.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals R

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Men's AP Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Purdue (27)	10-0	1508	4
2. Virginia (19)	8-0	1476	3
3. UConn (15)	11-0	1466	5
4. Alabama	8-1	1326	8
5. Houston	9-1	1224	1
6. Tennessee (1)	9-1	1189	7
7. Texas	7-1	1173	2
8. Kansas	9-1	1165	6
9. Arizona	8-1	1096	10
10. Arkansas	9-1	1029	9
11. Baylor	7-2	881	12
12. Duke	10-2	840	15
13. Kentucky	7-2	688	16
14. Indiana	8-2	622	14
15. Gonzaga	7-3	621	18
16. UCLA	8-2	606	19
17. Mississippi St.	9-0	497	23
18. Illinois	7-3	487	17
19. Auburn	8-1	453	11
20. Maryland	8-2	414	13
21. TCU	8-1	270	24
22. Wisconsin	8-2	255	-
23. Ohio St.	7-2	209	25
24. Virginia Tech	10-1	109	-
25. Miami	10-1	100	-

Others receiving votes: Memphis 74, Coll of Charleston 64, Arizona St 39, Marquette 39, Iowa St. 39, UNLV 27, Xavier 26, Iowa 25, West Virginia 20, Saint Mary's (Cal) 15, San Diego St. 14, Texas Tech 14, New Mexico 12, Utah 12, Creighton 11, Michigan St. 5, Utah St. 4, MVSU 4, Kansas St 2.

Men's USA Today Top 25

The USA Today Sports Top 25 men's basketball poll, with team's records through Sunday, total points based on 25 for first place through one point for 25th, ranking in last season's final poll and first-place votes received:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Purdue (9)	10-0	697	4
2. Virginia (12)	8-0	683	3
3. Connecticut (7)	11-0	677	5
4. Houston	9-1	588	1
5. Alabama	8-1	585	10
6. Kansas (1)	9-1	568	6
7. Tennessee	9-1	550	7
8. Texas	7-1	537	2
9. Arizona	8-1	487	9
10. Arkansas	9-1	466	8
11. Baylor	7-2	387	12
12. Duke	10-2	366	15
13. Kentucky	7-2	330	16
14. UCLA	8-2	310	18
15. Gonzaga	7-3	291	18
16. Indiana	8-2	272	11
17. Maryland	8-2	237	13
18. Auburn	8-1	223	14
19. Illinois	7-3	204	17
20. Mississippi State	9-0	155	26
21. Ohio State	7-2	134	23
22. TCU	8-1	102	25
23. Wisconsin	8-2	99	32
23. Virginia Tech	10-1	99	27
25. Miami (Fla.)	10-1	55	28

Dropped out: No. 20 Iowa State (8-2); No. 21 Creighton (6-4); No. 22 San Diego State (7-3); No. 24 Iowa (7-3).

Others receiving votes: Marquette (8-3) 46; Iowa State (8-2) 46; Iowa (7-3) 46; West Virginia (8-2) 32; Memphis (8-2) 29; Charleston (10-1) 24; Creighton (6-4) 20; Saint Mary's (8-3) 15; Xavier (7-3) 14; UNLV (10-0) 13; New Mexico (9-0) 9; San Diego State (7-3) 8; Kansas State (9-1) 6; Utah State (8-0) 4; Texas Tech (6-2) 4; Arizona State (9-1) 3; Rutgers (6-4) 2; North Carolina (6-4) 1; Michigan State (7-4) 1.

Monday's men's scores

EAST	
Columbia 57, Lafayette 45	
New Hampshire 104, Saint Joseph's (Maine) 61	
Stony Brook 71, Sacred Heart 64	
Syracuse 86, Monmouth (NJ) 71	
Yale 77, Fairfield 64	
SOUTH	
Austin Peay 86, Lindsey Wilson 61	
Louisiana-Lafayette 98, Louisiana College 63	
South Alabama 78, Alabama A&M 71	
MIDWEST	
Arizona St. 73, Creighton 71	
IUPUI 75, Spalding 53	
North Dakota 99, North Central 48	
Oral Roberts 84, Liberty 70	
S. Dakota St. 85, Mount Marty 56	
South Florida 72, N. Iowa 69	
SOUTHWEST	
Texas 87, Rice 81, OT	
UALR 83, Philander Smith 54	

FAR WEST

Gonzaga 88, N. Illinois 67
New Mexico 67, San Francisco 64
San Diego 84, UC San Diego 58
San Diego St. 88, Kennesaw St. 54
UC Santa Barbara 81, San Diego Christian 68

Men's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games	
No. 16 UCLA at No. 20 Maryland	
No. 17 Mississippi St. vs. Jackson St.	
No. 19 Auburn vs. Georgia St.	
Thursday's games	
No. 22 Wisconsin vs. Lehigh	
Saturday's games	
No. 1 Purdue vs. Davidson at Indianapolis	
No. 2 Virginia vs. No. 5 Houston	
No. 3 UConn at Butler	
No. 4 Alabama vs. No. 15 Gonzaga at Birmingham, Ala.	
No. 6 Tennessee at No. 9 Arizona	
No. 8 Kansas vs. No. 14 Indiana	
No. 10 Arkansas vs. Bradley at North Little Rock, Ark.	
No. 13 Kentucky vs. No. 16 UCLA at New York	
No. 17 Mississippi St. vs. Nicholls	
No. 18 Illinois vs. Alabama A&M	
No. 23 Ohio St. vs. North Carolina at New York	
No. 24 Virginia Tech vs. Grambling St.	
No. 25 Miami vs. St. Francis (Pa.)	
Sunday's games	
No. 7 Texas vs. Stanford at Dallas	
No. 11 Baylor vs. Washington St. at Dallas	
No. 19 Auburn at Southern Cal.	
No. 21 TCU vs. MVSU	

Women's AP Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' preseason women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and last year's final ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. South Carolina (28)	9-0	700	1
2. Stanford	10-1	672	2
3. Ohio St.	10-0	627	3
4. Indiana	10-0	623	4
5. Notre Dame	8-1	577	5
6. Virginia Tech	10-0	549	7
7. North Carolina	8-1	514	8
8. NC State	9-1	505	8
9. UConn	7-2	450	6
10. UCLA	9-1	416	13
11. LSU	9-0	391	11
12. Iowa	8-3	369	16
13. Utah	8-0	359	15
14. Iowa St.	7-2	329	10
15. Maryland	9-3	310	20
16. Oregon	7-1	264	17
16. Creighton	8-1	264	18
18. Baylor	7-2	186	19
19. Michigan	9-1	181	14
20. Arizona	7-1	177	12
21. Arkansas	12-0	169	21
22. Kansas	9-0	149	-
23. Gonzaga	9-2	100	22
24. Oklahoma	8-1	72	23
25. Villanova	9-2	56	25

Others receiving votes: St. John's 19, Marquette 18, Louisville 14, Virginia 7, Texas 6, Kansas St 5, Duke 5, Rice 4, Florida St. 3, Missouri 2, Southern Cal 2, DePaul 2, Columbia 2, Nebraska 1, Middle Tennessee 1.

Monday's women's scores

SOUTH	
Florida A&M 77, Tuskegee 75, OT	
Gardner-Webb 61, VCU 56	
Louisiana Tech 73, South Alabama 50	
SC State 64, UNC-Greensboro 53	
SC-Upstate 64, Morehead St. 59	
MIDWEST	
Bellarmine 76, Franklin 49	
DePaul 81, Howard 56	
Minnesota 105, Chicago St. 54	
N. Illinois 67, Lindenwood (Mo.) 56	
North Dakota 87, Mayville St. 66	
S. Dakota St. 75, UT Martin 36	
SOUTHWEST	
Incarnate Word 92, Schreiner 41	
Texas A&M-CC 80, St. Thomas (Texas) 23	
FAR WEST	
Boise St. 97, Evergreen St. 31	
Denver 104, Colorado Christian 74	
Montana St. 91, Saint Mary's (Cal) 56	
Women's Top 25 schedule	
Wednesday's games	
No. 11 LSU vs. Lamar	
No. 13 Utah vs. Colorado	
No. 20 Arizona vs. Texas Southern	
Thursday's games	
No. 1 South Carolina vs. S. Dakota St. at Sioux Falls, S.D.	
No. 8 NC State vs. Davidson	
No. 10 UCLA at Southern Cal	
No. 16 Oregon vs. E. Washington	
No. 18 Baylor vs. Tennessee St.	
Friday's games	
No. 3 Ohio St. vs. Albany (NY)	
No. 7 North Carolina vs. SC-Upstate	
No. 22 Kansas vs. Tulsa	

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League
CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Agreed to terms with 1B/DH Josh Bell on a two-year contract.
OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Acquired LHP Kyle Muller, RHPs Freddy Tarnok and Royber Salinas and C Manny Pina from Atlanta in exchange for C Sean Murphy. Acquired OF Esteyru Ruiz from Milwaukee in exchange for C William Contreras and RHPs Justin Yeager and Joel Payamps. Designated INF Vimal Machin for assignment.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
NBA — Fined Boston G Grant Williams an undisclosed amount for hitting the game ball into the spectator stands during a game against Golden State on Dec. 10. Fined Atlanta G Trae Young \$25,000 for throwing the game ball into the spectator stands at the conclusion of a game against Chicago on Dec. 11.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Promoted WR Pharoah Cooper and TE Maxx Williams from the practice squad to the active roster.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Reinstated G Elijah Wilkinson from injured reserve. Designated G Matt Hennessy to return to practice from injured reserve. Waived RB Damien Williams and LB Nate Landman.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Signed WR T.Y. Hilton.
HOUSTON TEXANS — Released DT Brandin Bryant from the practice squad.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed G Jordan Meredith to the practice squad.
LOS ANGELES RAMS — Claimed DT Larrrell Murchison off waivers from Tennessee. Placed WR Jacob Harris on injured reserve.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Promoted LBs Jamie Collins Sr. and Cam McGrone from the practice squad to the active roster.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Signed RB David Johnson. Waived G Josh Andrews.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Waived OLB Ola Adeniyi and LB Joe Schobert.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Reinstated QB Carson Wentz from injured reserve. Placed C Tyler Larsen on injured reserve.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League
ARIZONA COYOTES — Placed D Dysin Mayo on waivers.

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Recalled D Zach Cooper to Rockford (AHL) from Indy (ECHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Recalled G Daniil Tarasov from Cleveland (AHL). Assigned G Jet Greaves to Cleveland.

DALLAS STARS — Recalled LW Riley Tuft from Texas (AHL).
DETROIT RED WINGS — Recalled C Austin Czarnik from Grand Rapids (AHL).

LOS ANGELES KINGS — Recalled C Rasmus Kupari and D Jordan Spence from Ontario (AHL).
NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Recalled Ds Kevin Gravel and Roland McKeown from Milwaukee (AHL).

OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled C Rourke Chartier from Belleville (AHL).
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Recalled LW Alexey Toropchenko from Springfield (AHL).

SAN JOSE SHARKS — Recalled D Nick Cicek, Fs C.J. Suess and Evgeny Svechnikov from San Jose (AHL).
SEATTLE KRACEN — Recalled D Gustav Olofsson from Coachella Valley (AHL). Claimed RW Eeli Tolvanen off waivers from Nashville. Placed C Karson Kuhlman on waivers.

VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS — Recalled D Connor Corcoran to Henderson (AHL) from Savannah (ECHL). Recalled RW Jonas Rondbjerg, Ds Brayden Pachal and Kaedan Korczak from Henderson.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer
AUSTIN FC — Signed F Gyasi Zardes to a three-year contract.
MINNESOTA UNITED — Acquired D Donnell Henry off waivers from Toronto.

National Women's Soccer League
WASHINGTON SPIRIT — Signed D Gabrielle Carle to a two-year contract.

SPORTLIGHT

Dec. 14

1920 — Jack Dempsey knocks out Bill Brennan in the 12th round at Madison Square Garden to retain his world heavyweight title.

1965 — Rookie Rick Barry of the San Francisco Warriors scores 57 points in a 141-137 loss to the New York Knicks.

1975 — Los Angeles Lakers center Kareem Abdul-Jabbar grabs an NBA-record 29 defensive rebounds in a 110-100 victory over Detroit.

2002 — Michael Jordan matches his career low with two points as the Washington Wizards beat the short-handed Toronto Raptors. The 39-year-old Jordan shoots 1-for-9 from the field, but has nine assists and eight rebounds as he matches his season high by playing 40 minutes.

2021 Steph Curry makes his 2,974th three-point shot to pass Ray Allen as the NBA's greatest career three-point shooter during Golden State Warriors' 105-96 win over NY Knicks at Madison Square Garden.

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL

American Conference East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	10	3	0	.769	353	221
Miami	8	5	0	.615	316	312
N.Y. Jets	7	6	0	.538	264	243
New England	7	6	0	.538	276	239

South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	7	6	0	.538	241	276
Jacksonville	5	8	0	.385	294	294
Indianapolis	4	8	1	.346	209	298
e-Houston	1	11	1	.115	211	314

North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	9	4	0	.692	301	250
Cincinnati	9	4	0	.692	335	265
Cleveland	5	8	0	.385	300	323
Pittsburgh	5	8	0	.385	227	293

West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	3	0	.769	384	298
L.A. Chargers	7	6	0	.538	295	326
Las Vegas	5	8	0	.385	308	313
e-Denver	3	10	0	.231	194	238

National Conference East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Philadelphia	12	1	0	.923	386	248
Dallas	10	3	0	.769	360	229
N.Y. Giants	7	5	1	.577	267	300
Washington	7	5	1	.577	253	256

South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	6	7	0	.462	224	254
Atlanta	5	8	0	.385	288	312
Carolina	5	8	0	.385	260	290
New Orleans	4	9	0	.308	265	297

North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Minnesota	10	3	0	.769	312	313
Detroit	6	7	0	.462	349	347
Green Bay	5	8	0	.385	263	302
e-Chicago	3	10	0	.231	270	333

West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	9	4	0	.692	317	197
Seattle	7	6	0	.538	342	334
Arizona	4	9	0	.308	277	348
L.A. Rams	4	9	0	.308	218	296

e-Eliminated from playoffs x-clinched playoff spot

Sunday's games
Baltimore 16, Pittsburgh 14
Buffalo 20, N.Y. Jets 12
Cincinnati 23, Cleveland 10
Dallas 27, Houston 23
Detroit 34, Minnesota 23
Jacksonville 36, Tennessee 22
Philadelphia 48, N.Y. Giants 22
Kansas City 34, Denver 28
Carolina 30, Seattle 24
San Francisco 35, Tampa Bay 7
L.A. Chargers 23, Miami 17

Open: Indianapolis, Atlanta, Chicago, Green Bay, New Orleans, Washington

Monday's game
New England 27, Arizona 13
Thursday's game
San Francisco at Seattle
Saturday, Dec. 17
Indianapolis at Minnesota
Baltimore at Cleveland
Miami at Buffalo

Sunday, Dec. 18
Atlanta at New Orleans
Dallas at Jacksonville
Detroit at N.Y. Jets
Kansas City at Houston
Philadelphia at Chicago
Pittsburgh at Carolina
Arizona at Denver
New England at Las Vegas
Cincinnati at Tampa Bay
Tennessee at L.A. Chargers
N.Y. Giants at Washington

Monday, Dec. 19
L.A. Rams at Green Bay
Thursday, Dec. 22
Jacksonville at New York Jets
Saturday, Dec. 24
Buffalo at Chicago
Atlanta at Baltimore
Cincinnati at New England
Detroit at Carolina
Houston at Tennessee
New Orleans at Cleveland
New York giants at Minnesota
Seattle at Kansas City
Washington at San Francisco
Philadelphia at Dallas
Las Vegas at Pittsburgh

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

FCS playoffs

Semifinals
Saturday, Dec. 17
South Dakota St. vs. Montana St.
North Dakota St. vs. UIW
Championship
Sunday, Jan. 8
Semifinal winners

NCAA Division II playoffs
Championship
Saturday, Dec. 17
Ferris St. (13-

WORLD CUP/MLB

US almost sent Reyna back home

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — American midfielder Gio Reyna almost was sent home from the World Cup because of a lack of hustle in training, for which he later apologized.

U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter revealed the team's concerns about a player when he spoke last week at the HOW Institute for Society's Summit on Moral Leadership in New York. Excerpts of his remarks were later published in a newsletter by Charter Works, which analyzes management and workplace trends.

"In this last World Cup, we had a player that was clearly not meeting expectations on and off the field," Berhalter was quoted as saying. "One of 26 players, so it stood out. As a staff, we sat together for hours deliberating what we were going to do with this player. We were ready to book a plane ticket home, that's how extreme it was. And what it came down to was, we're going to have one more conversation with him, and part of the conversation was how we're going to behave from here out. There aren't going to be any more infractions."

"But the other thing we said to him was, you're going to have to apologize to the group, but it's going to have to say why you're apologizing. It's going to have to go deeper than just 'Guys, I'm sorry,'" Berhalter went on. "And I prepped the leadership group with this. I said, 'OK, this guy's going to apologize to you as a group, to the whole team.' And what was fantastic in this whole thing is



NATACHA PISARENKO/AP

Gio Reyna of the United States kicks the ball during the World Cup round of 16 match against the Netherlands at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha, Qatar, on Dec. 3. Reyna came on as a late sub.

that after he apologized, they stood up one by one and said: 'Listen, it hasn't been good enough. You haven't been meeting our expectations of a teammate and we want to see change.' They really took ownership of that process. And from that day on there were no issues with this player."

While Berhalter didn't identify the player, media outlets reported Sunday that it was Reyna, and a per-

son familiar with the matter confirmed the identity to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity since no announcement was made.

"Just before the World Cup, coach Berhalter told me that my role at the tournament would be very limited. I was devastated," Reyna said in a statement Monday. "I fully expected and desperately wanted to contribute to the play of a talented group as we tried to make a statement at the

World Cup.

"I am also a very emotional person, and I fully acknowledge that I let my emotions get the best of me and affect my training and behavior for a few days after learning about my limited role," Reyna said. "I apologized to my teammates and coach for this, and I was told I was forgiven. Thereafter, I shook off my disappointment and gave everything I had on and off the field."

Moroccan 'dream' faces biggest test against France

By STEVE DOUGLAS
Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — Morocco's improbable, history-making run at the World Cup is about to get its ultimate test.

Africa's first World Cup semifinalist is playing defending champion France and its star striker Kylian Mbappé, the leader of a new wave of soccer superstars coming out of an era dominated by Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Wednesday's match has cultural and political connotations — Morocco was under French rule from 1912-1956 — and the outcome is far from the foregone conclusion many would presume by looking at the names of the players and the rankings of the teams.

Morocco has exceeded all expectations in Qatar by beating second-ranked Belgium in the group stage and then eliminating European powerhouses Spain and Portugal in the knockout phase to reach the semifinals.

No African or Arab nation has ever gotten this far.

It is one of the biggest stories in the World Cup's 92-year history, and Morocco is not done yet.

"I was asked if we can win the World Cup and I said, 'Why not? We can dream, it doesn't cost you anything to have dreams,'" said Walid Regragui, Morocco's French-born coach. "European countries are used to winning the World Cup and we have played top sides, we have not had an easy run. Anyone playing us is going to be afraid of us now."

Even France?

The defending champions have just passed their own big test by coming through a tough quarterfinal match against England, on a rare occasion when Mbappé was kept quiet.

No player has scored more than his five goals and it won't be easy for Mbappé to add to that tally against Morocco, which has yet to concede a goal to an opposition player at this World Cup — or indeed in its nine games since Regragui was hired in August. The only goal allowed was an own-goal by its defender, Nayef Aguerd, against Canada in the group stage.

Morocco might have some injuries now — Aguerd and fellow center back Romain Saiss could be missing Wednesday — but Regragui's game plan relies on team shape and



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

Morocco's players celebrate after winning the World Cup quarterfinal against Portugal at Al Thumama Stadium in Doha, Qatar, on Saturday.

discipline more than any individual.

The Morocco coach said his team is ready to "change the mentality" of Africa, and he's told his players not to settle for anything less than the top prize.

"We're going to fight to move on, for the African nations, for the Arab world," he said.

Murphy to Braves in 3-team deal

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Atlanta Braves general manager Alex Anthopoulos acknowledges he paid a substantial price to acquire Sean Murphy from the Oakland Athletics in a three-team trade.



Murphy



Contreras

The Braves added Murphy as part of a trade that sent All-Star catcher William Contreras to the Milwaukee Brewers.

Oakland acquired catcher Manny Piña and pitching prospects Kyle Muller, Freddy Tarnok and Royber Salinas from Atlanta and outfield prospect Esteury Ruiz from Milwaukee. The Brewers also received right-handed pitchers Joel Payamps and Justin Yeager.

"I had a really nice conversation with Sean," Athletics general manager David Forst said. "He was not surprised he got traded, but surprised to be hearing from me today and where the landing spot was."

Murphy, 28, batted .250 with 18 homers, 66 RBIs and a .759 OPS in 148 games this past season. He's regarded as an elite defender and won a Gold Glove in 2021.

Contreras, who turns 25 on Dec. 24, made the NL All-Star team as a designated hitter in 2022. He batted .278 with 20 homers, 45 RBIs and an .860 OPS while making 57 starts at catcher, 31 at designated hitter and one in left field.

"His bat is something that has the chance to be really special," Brewers president of baseball operations Matt Arnold said. "The fact that he hit 20 home runs as a young guy and was an All-Star last year at a very young age with a long tail of control is something that we feel really good about. We like the fact that he fits into our lineup immediately and hopefully he's a Brewer — and a productive one — for a very long time."

The Brewers also boosted their bullpen with the addition of Payamps, who went 3-6 with a 3.23 ERA in 41 games with the Kansas City Royals and Athletics last season. Yeager spent the 2022 season in the Braves' farm system.

Scoreboard

World Cup Semifinals Tuesday

Croatia vs. Argentina

Wednesday

Morocco vs. France. **AFN-Sports, 7:45 p.m. Wednesday CET; 3:45 a.m. Thursday JKT**

NFL

Pats rally for win over Cards; Murray hurt

By DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Patriots linebacker Raekwon McMillan was simply trying to do his job, running over to make sure that teammate Kyle Dugger made the tackle on a routine play.

Suddenly, he saw a football on the ground.

McMillan scooped it up and ran 23 yards for the touchdown, giving the Patriots the go-ahead score in a 27-13 win on Monday night over the Arizona Cardinals, who lost starting Kyler Murray in the first quarter to a potentially serious knee injury.

“I looked back, saw it was just me and a lineman,” McMillan said of his mindset when scooping the fumble. “I said, ‘If I can’t beat a lineman, then I don’t deserve to be out here.’”

New England trailed 13-10 at the break but tied the game at 13-all early in the third quarter after a short field goal. A few minutes later, the Patriots got their game-changing play and a 20-13 lead later when McMillan scored his touchdown, snatching the loose ball off the grass and sprinting toward the end zone.

Kyle Dugger forced the turnover by stripping Cardinals three-time All-Pro receiver DeAndre Hopkins, who had just caught a pass.

“I try to be perfect. I let myself down,” Hopkins said. “Let coach down, let the guys down. I haven’t fumbled all year. It is definitely a reminder to protect the ball.”

The Patriots pushed their advantage to 27-13 early in the fourth quarter on Pierre Strong Jr.’s 3-yard run, then leaned on their defense to complete the much-needed win. New England’s defense had six sacks, including three by linebacker Josh Uche.

Mac Jones threw for 235 yards

and finished 24-for-35 with an interception as New England (7-6) snapped a two-game losing skid to strengthened their AFC playoff positioning.

“There’s going to be a lot change over these next four weeks for everybody, that’s just how it goes,” center David Andrews said. “You start looking at (playoffs) and you’ll let something slip away.”

Arizona (4-9) has lost five of six games, including the last three.

Murray was hurt on the third play of the game, immediately changing the complexion of the evening. The fourth-year quarterback was flushed out of the pocket and running to his right when he tried to juke past a Patriots defender, but tumbled to the grass in obvious pain.

Players from both teams surrounded the quarterback before he was carted off the field with a towel draped over his head.

The 36-year-old Colt McCoy has proven a capable replacement for Murray over the past two seasons, coming into Monday’s game with a 3-2 mark when Murray was injured. He worked his magic again — at least for a while — leading the Cardinals to a 13-10 halftime lead.

“We’ve battled injuries all year long,” McCoy said. “The guys that are going to go in there are going to fight until the very end. I don’t think there is any more you can ask for and I will be proud to go lead them.”

The Cardinals took a 3-0 lead early in the second quarter after a 33-yard field goal by Matt Prater. They had good field position for the drive after Isaiah Simmons intercepted a pass from Jones, who was hit on the arm by rookie Cam Thomas as he was throwing.

James Conner bulldozed his way forward for a 10-yard touchdown late in the second quarter, breaking multiple tackles to give



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

New England Patriots linebacker Raekwon McMillan celebrates after returning a fumble for a touchdown against the Arizona Cardinals during the second half on Monday in Glendale, Ariz.

the Cardinals a 13-7 lead late in the second quarter. Conner finished with a team-high 85 yards rushing.

The Patriots scored their lone touchdown of the first half when rookie Kevin Harris ran 14 yards to the end zone.

Murray’s tough year

Arizona’s recent hopes as a franchise have revolved around the development of Murray, who was taken with the No. 1 overall pick out of Oklahoma in 2019.

The quarterback’s fourth year has been a tough one. And that was before Monday’s injury.

Murray signed a \$230.5 million contract during the offseason that could keep him with the franchise until 2028, but that was when a

steady stream of unwanted headlines started.

The two-time Pro Bowl selection took a lot of ridicule after it was discovered his new contract mandated at least four hours of “independent study” during game weeks, which was unusual for an NFL quarterback. The clause was later removed, but the damage to his reputation was done.

Murray also battled a bout of COVID-19 during training camp which kept him out for about a week and recently took criticism from former teammate Patrick Peterson, who said on his “All Things Covered” podcast that “Kyler Murray don’t care about nobody but Kyler Murray.”

He now has to deal with what could be the most serious injury of

his professional career. He had thrown for 2,359 yards, 14 touchdowns and seven interceptions through 10 games before Monday’s injury.

Injuries

Patriots: CB Jack Jones (knee), RB Rhamondre Stevenson (ankle) and WR DeVante Parker (head) were all injured during the first quarter. Stevenson returned later in the first half, but was ruled out following halftime.

Cardinals: WR Rondale Moore (groin) and CB Byron Murphy Jr. (back) were among the team’s six inactives. ... CB Marco Wilson Jr. (stinger) left in the second quarter and didn’t return. ... DE Zach Allen (hand) left in the second half and didn’t return.

49ers expect Samuel back before end of regular season

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Star receiver Deebo Samuel is expected to return to the San Francisco 49ers before the end of the regular season after the team got a favorable report on his injury.

The Niners announced Monday that Samuel has a sprained left ankle and MCL in his left knee, but is only expected to miss a couple of weeks.

San Francisco also said quarterback Brock Purdy is day to day with injuries to his oblique and ribs. Purdy would have been limited if the 49ers had practiced Monday ahead of Thursday night’s game at Seattle.

The initial fears for Samuel were for a much more significant injury when his leg got bent back



JED JACOBSON/AP

San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Deebo Samuel, middle, reacts as he is carted off the field during the first half against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Santa Clara, Calif., on Sunday.

awkwardly as he went down on a run in the first half of a 35-7 win over Tampa Bay on Sunday.

Samuel screamed as he tried to get up and then was taken off the field on a cart with his head in his

hands in tears.

But the final diagnosis was much more optimistic as the Niners (9-4) are now expected to have their dynamic playmaker back for the end of the season and playoffs.

Samuel had scored on a 13-yard TD run on San Francisco’s first possession Sunday. He had four carries for 21 yards and four catches for 43 yards.

Samuel has 54 catches for 612 yards and two TDs, along 228 yards rushing and three TD runs this season.

Purdy threw two TD passes and ran for another score in his first career start on Sunday in place of the injured Jimmy Garoppolo despite hurting himself on the second series of the game.

“I think it was a challenge for him,” coach Kyle Shanahan said.

“Just talking to him and seeing him after the game. I think he really toughed it out, did some real good things with it and I know he is sore today.”

In other injury news, the Niners said defensive back Dontae Johnson tore his ACL and will be out for the season, and defensive tackle Kevin Givens has an MCL injury and will miss at least a few weeks.

Cornerback Samuel Womack will miss Thursday’s game in concussion protocol.

Defensive lineman Kerry Hyder (ankle) and cornerback Ambry Thomas (ankle) both would have been limited in the Niners had practiced.

San Francisco only held a walk-through Monday with a short week ahead.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/NHL

NHL scoreboard

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Texas tops Rice with Beard gone

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	27	22	4	1	45	106	58
Toronto	29	18	5	6	42	93	70
Tampa Bay	27	17	9	1	35	95	82
Detroit	27	13	8	6	32	84	86
Montreal	28	14	12	2	30	84	97
Florida	29	13	12	4	30	98	98
Ottawa	28	12	14	2	26	86	89
Buffalo	28	12	14	2	26	109	103
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	28	21	5	2	44	103	67
Pittsburgh	29	17	8	4	38	102	84
Carolina	27	15	6	6	36	80	73
N.Y. Rangers	30	15	10	5	35	93	85
N.Y. Islanders	29	17	12	0	34	92	80
Washington	30	14	12	4	32	87	89
Philadelphia	29	9	13	7	25	70	96
Columbus	27	10	15	2	22	80	111
Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	27	18	8	1	37	89	69
Dallas	29	16	8	5	37	106	83
Minnesota	28	15	11	2	32	88	85
Colorado	26	14	10	2	30	82	74
Nashville	26	12	11	3	27	67	79
St. Louis	29	13	15	1	27	85	108
Arizona	26	9	13	4	22	72	96
Chicago	26	7	15	4	18	62	94
Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	30	20	9	1	41	98	80
Seattle	27	16	8	3	35	96	85
Los Angeles	31	15	11	5	35	106	112
Edmonton	29	16	13	0	32	103	99
Calgary	29	13	11	5	31	87	89
Vancouver	28	12	13	3	27	97	109
San Jose	30	9	16	5	23	93	110
Anaheim	29	7	19	3	17	70	123

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

Sunday's games
 Colorado 3, St. Louis 2, OT
 Seattle 5, Florida 2
 Columbus 6, Los Angeles 5, OT
 Washington 5, Winnipeg 2
 Arizona 5, Philadelphia 4, OT
 Boston 3, Vegas 1

Monday's games
 Pittsburgh 2, Dallas 1
 N.Y. Rangers 4, New Jersey 3, OT
 Montreal 2, Calgary 1, SO
 Ottawa 3, Anaheim 0
 St. Louis 1, Nashville 0, OT
 Minnesota 2, Edmonton 1

Tuesday's games
 Anaheim at Toronto
 Carolina at Detroit
 Columbus at Florida
 Dallas at New Jersey
 Los Angeles at Buffalo
 N.Y. Islanders at Boston
 Seattle at Tampa Bay
 Edmonton at Nashville
 Vegas at Winnipeg
 Philadelphia at Colorado
 Washington at Chicago
 Arizona at San Jose

Wednesday's games
 Montreal at Ottawa
 Detroit at Minnesota
 Vancouver at Calgary

Thursday's games
 Anaheim at Montreal
 Columbus at Tampa Bay
 Dallas at Washington
 Los Angeles at Boston
 Philadelphia at New Jersey
 Pittsburgh at Florida
 Seattle at Carolina
 Toronto at N.Y. Rangers
 Nashville at Winnipeg
 Vegas at Chicago
 Buffalo at Colorado
 St. Louis at Edmonton

Friday's games
 Chicago at Minnesota
 St. Louis at Calgary
 N.Y. Islanders at Arizona

Scoring leaders

Through Monday				
	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	29	25	30	55
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	29	19	27	46
Jason Robertson, DAL	29	23	19	42
Tage Thompson, BUF	28	21	20	41
Nikita Kucherov, TB	27	11	28	39
Sidney Crosby, PIT	29	17	21	38
David Pastrnak, BOS	27	19	19	38

Associated Press
 AUSTIN, Texas — No. 7 Texas had already been through a long, bewildering day, and there was still a game to play.

Coach Chris Beard was arrested on a felony domestic violence charge early Monday. Assistant Rodney Terry called the players together to talk, urging them to rally to each other and stay focused on their matchup with Rice.

By tipoff, Beard was out of jail but suspended indefinitely without pay. That left Terry to direct the Longhorns to a tough 87-81 overtime win over Rice.

Terry summed up Monday as a "difficult day."

"I took our older guys... and really just had a really good talk in terms of there's going to be things like this the rest of your life. It's how you deal with them, adapt and adjust. At the end of the day, we have a job to do," Terry said. "I thought they responded to that well."

Marcus Carr, a sixth-year guard, scored 28 points for Texas. The school did not make the players available for comment after the game.

Texas has not yet publicly committed to Terry as the acting coach beyond Monday night's game. Texas doesn't play again until Sunday in Dallas against Stanford. Terry said the school had not yet talked to him



STEPHEN SPILLMAN/AP

Associate head coach Rodney Terry takes the court, stepping in for the suspended head coach Chris Beard before No. 7 Texas' game against Rice on Monday in Austin, Texas.

about any future games.

Beard is in his second season of a seven-year contract that pays him more than \$5 million per year. His contract includes a provision that he could be fired for cause if arrested on a felony charge. The formal charge is assault by strangulation/suffocation — family violence and carries a possible prison sentence of two to 10 years if convicted.

Beard had Texas (8-1) humming in his second season. After starting 6-0, the Longhorns were No. 2, the program's highest ranking in more

than a decade.

According to the arrest affidavit, the woman told police she is Beard's fiancée and they have been in a relationship for six years. She said they had been in an argument where she broke his glasses before he "just snapped on me and became super violent."

According to the affidavit, the woman told police "he choked me, bit me, bruises all over my leg, throwing me around and going nuts."

Terry said he has not read the

specific allegations against Beard or talked to him since his arrest but said, "I love Beard like my own brother."

No. 15 Gonzaga 88, Northern Illinois 67: Drew Timme scored 26 points, and Gonzaga extended the nation's longest home win streak to 71 games.

Ben Gregg had 18 points and seven rebounds for the Zags (8-3), and fellow reserve Malachi Smith finished with 14 points. Timme went 9-for-15 from the field and 8-for-9 at the line.

NHL ROUNDUP

Chytil lifts Rangers past Devils in OT

Associated Press
 NEW YORK — Filip Chytil scored 2:15 into overtime and the New York Rangers rallied to beat New Jersey 4-3 on Monday night, snapping the Devils' 11-game road win streak.

Vincent Trochek had a goal and an assist, Kaapo Kakko and Chris Kreider also scored, and K'Andre Miller had two assists for the Rangers, who came back from two two-goal deficits to get their fourth straight win. Igor Shesterkin stopped 26 shots. The Rangers are 5-1-1 in their last seven games.

In the extra period, Chytil won it with his sixth of the season and first career overtime goal.

"Nice pass from Artemi (Panarin), I just shoot, score goal," Chytil said. "A great comeback from the team. We showed our character, a good two points. We just have to keep going like that."

Nico Hischier, Dawson Mercer and Jack Hughes scored for the Devils, who had not lost on the road since dropping the season opener at



MARY ALTAFFER/AP

Rangers center Filip Chytil, right, celebrates with teammates after scoring the winning goal in overtime against the Devils on Monday.

Philadelphia and finished one win shy of tying the NHL record. Vitek Vanecsek had 19 saves for New Jersey, losing for only the fourth time in 16 decisions.

"We had the opportunity to put the nail in the coffin with the penalty shot but we didn't," Devils coach

Lindy Ruff said. "That probably gave them momentum."

Penguins 2, Stars 1: Evgeni Malkin scored with 35 seconds remaining to lift host Pittsburgh to its sixth straight win.

Malkin's ninth goal of the year came after Bryan Rust's shot at-

tempt from in close was poked away. While Rust's momentum carried him into Dallas goaltender Jake Oettinger, Malkin flipped the puck into the open net.

Senators 3, Ducks 0: Cam Talbot had 32 saves for his first shutout with host Ottawa in a costly win for the Senators.

Ottawa's Tim Stutzle went awkwardly into the boards after being hit by Brett Leason midway through the first period and did not return, and Tyler Motte missed the final two periods after going down hard late in the first period and suffering an upper-body injury.

Canadiens 2, Flames 1 (SO): Nick Suzuki and Kirby Dach scored in the shootout to lift host Montreal over Calgary.

Wild 2, Oilers 1: Matt Boldy had a goal and an assist, Freddy Gau-dreau also scored, and host Minnesota beat Edmonton.

Blues 1, Predators 0 (OT): Brayden Schenn scored at 2:23 of overtime to lead host St. Louis over Nashville.

NBA

ROUNDUP

Rested Nets top skidding Wizards

Associated Press

WASHINGTON —The Brooklyn Nets are rolling, and Kyrie Irving is only talking about their commitment to playing hard and stacking up wins.

That's hardly a coincidence.

Kevin Durant scored 30 points, Irving had 24 and the well-rested Nets methodically pulled away for a 112-100 win against the over-matched Washington Wizards on Monday night.

The Nets were the talk of the NBA for their early-season turmoil that included the ouster of coach Steve Nash and Irving's eight-game suspension for tweeting a link to an antisemitic documentary, an action for which he ultimately apologized.

Now, Brooklyn is coming together under new coach Jacque Vaughn and has won eight of nine.

"Man, let's just go win ball games. That's it, that's really what the attitude is," Irving said. "We know the talent we have. This is our group. No more excuses, no more distractions."

The Nets, who won at Indiana on Saturday night with their top seven scorers sitting out, matched a season best with their fourth straight victory. All those players were back in action Monday except Royce O'Neale, who missed a second consecutive game for personal reasons.

"I thought you saw our guys look extremely fresh," Vaughn said. "We had a lot of juice to start the game, and plenty to finish."

Will Barton scored a season-high 22 points for the Wizards, who lost their season-worst seventh game in a row and now face a six-game trip out West that could bury them in the Eastern Conference standings. Washington was missing leading scorer Bradley Beal for the fourth straight game because of a right hamstring strain.

"Hopefully we start getting some guys back. Hopefully, that's the plan," said Kyle Kuzma, who scored 20 points. "Tough stretch, we've lost a lot in a row, now we're going to the West playing all playoff teams. So if we don't figure it out, it's going to be a long trip."

Clippers 113, Celtics 93: Paul George scored 26 points, Kawhi Leonard had season highs of 25 points and nine rebounds, and host Los Angeles beat NBA-leading Boston.

Leonard also had six assists in one of his best all-around games of a young season that has been interrupted at times while he eases his way back from ACL surgery that cost him all of last season.

Mavericks 121, Thunder 114: Luka Doncic had 38 points and 11 rebounds in his return from a one-game absence, and Spencer Dinwiddie added 20 points and 10 assists as host Dallas defeated Oklahoma City.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 20 for the Mavericks, who ended a two-game skid.

Heat 87, Pacers 82: Bam Adebayo had 22 points and 17 re-



Nick Wass/AP

Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant looks to shoot against Washington Wizards forward Deni Avdija during the second half Monday in Washington. The Nets won 112-100.

bounds, and Jimmy Butler scored seven straight points late in the fourth quarter to help visiting Miami hold off Indiana.

Grizzlies 128, Hawks 103: Tyus Jones had 22 points and 11 assists, Dillon Brooks added 18 points and streaking host Memphis beat shorthanded Atlanta with both teams minus key starters.

Spurs 112, Cavaliers 111: Keldon Johnson scored 21 points and blocked a late shot by Donovan Mitchell as host San Antonio held off Cleveland.

Trail Blazers 133, Timberwolves 112: Damian Lillard tied his own franchise record by making 11 three-pointers and finished with 38 points, leading host Portland past Minnesota.

Reborn: Williamson determined after 3 years of injury

FROM PAGE 24

in NBA history as an injury-prone, out-of-shape bust.

Indeed, the repeated celebratory flexing of his well-defined biceps after he barrels through traffic in the paint and deftly finishes at the rim are reminding anyone watching that he is very much in shape — and in form.

During New Orleans' past seven games, with Pelicans high-scoring wing player Brandon Ingram sidelined by a left foot injury, Williamson has taken charge, averaging 30.3 points. He's scored on everything from rim-rattling, alley-oop dunks, to explosive, off-balance, driving layups while being fouled, to put backs and even three-pointers.

"I got to thank my teammates and my coaches," Williamson said when asked about his recent string of prolific performances. "My teammates looked at me like, 'All right, we're depending on you.'

"I mean, that trust does a lot for somebody," Williamson contin-



MATTHEW HINTON/AP

New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson reacts after dunking against Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker, bottom left, in the second half in New Orleans on Friday. The Pelicans won the game 128-117.

ued. "So, to see them trust me — you know I missed all last season — it means a lot to me. I simply just don't want to let them down."

Williamson missed most of his rookie season because of protracted rehabilitation from a preseason

knee injury. His second season was an individual success; he averaged 27 points in 61 games and was named a first-time All-Star, but the Pelicans missed the playoffs and fired coach Stan Van Gundy after only one season.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference					
Atlantic Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	21	7	.750	—	
Brooklyn	17	12	.586	4½	
Philadelphia	14	12	.538	6	
New York	14	13	.519	6½	
Toronto	13	14	.481	7½	
Southeast Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	14	14	.500	—	
Miami	13	15	.464	1	
Washington	11	17	.393	3	
Orlando	8	20	.286	6	
Charlotte	7	20	.259	6½	
Central Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	19	7	.731	—	
Cleveland	17	11	.607	3	
Indiana	14	14	.500	6	
Chicago	11	15	.423	8	
Detroit	7	22	.241	13½	
Western Conference					
Southwest Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
New Orleans	18	8	.692	—	
Memphis	18	9	.667	½	
Dallas	14	13	.519	4½	
San Antonio	9	18	.333	9½	
Houston	8	18	.308	10	
Northwest Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Denver	16	10	.615	—	
Portland	15	12	.556	1½	
Utah	15	14	.517	2½	
Minnesota	13	14	.481	3½	
Oklahoma City	11	16	.407	5½	
Pacific Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Phoenix	16	11	.593	—	
Sacramento	14	11	.560	1	
L.A. Clippers	16	13	.552	1	
Golden State	14	13	.519	2	
L.A. Lakers	11	15	.423	4½	
Monday's games					
Brooklyn 112, Washington 100					
Miami 87, Indiana 82					
Memphis 128, Atlanta 103					
San Antonio 112, Cleveland 111					
Dallas 121, Oklahoma City 114					
Portland 133, Minnesota 112					
L.A. Clippers 113, Boston 93					
Tuesday's games					
Sacramento at Philadelphia					
Golden State at Milwaukee					
Phoenix at Houston					
New Orleans at Utah					
Boston at L.A. Lakers					
Wednesday's games					
Atlanta at Orlando					
Detroit at Charlotte					
Golden State at Indiana					
New York at Chicago					
Sacramento at Toronto					
Miami at Oklahoma City					
Portland at San Antonio					
Cleveland at Dallas					
Washington at Denver					
Minnesota at L.A. Clippers					
Thursday's games					
Miami at Houston					
Milwaukee at Memphis					
New Orleans at Utah					
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers					
Friday's games					
Atlanta at Charlotte					
Sacramento at Detroit					
Brooklyn at Toronto					
Golden State at Philadelphia					
Indiana at Cleveland					
Orlando at Boston					
Minnesota at Oklahoma City					
New York at Chicago					
Portland at Dallas					
Denver at L.A. Lakers					
Leaders					
Through Monday Scoring					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Doncic, DAL	25	285	186	827	33.1
Gil-Alex., OKC	25	260	236	780	31.2
Antetokmpo, MIL	22	252	163	685	31.1
Curry, GS	24	245	108	721	30.0
Durant, BKN	28	302	190	840	30.0
Rebounding					
	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Davis, LAL	23	74	212	286	12.4
Capela, ATL	25	112	194	306	12.2
Gobert, MIN	25	91	212	303	12.1

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



VASHA HUNT/AP

Alabama linebacker Will Anderson Jr. was selected to the AP All-America team for the second straight year.

Williams, Anderson lead All-Americans

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams was one of three Southern California players selected to The Associated Press All-American team released Monday.

Offensive lineman Andrew Vorhees and defensive end Tuli Tuipulotu joined their quarterback to give USC more players on the first team than any other school. The AP All-America team is presented by Regions Bank.

Williams, named last week the AP player of the year, became the eighth USC player to win the Heisman over the weekend after accounting for 47 touchdowns this season and leading USC to the Pac-12 title game.

The Trojans also had center Brett Neilon and cornerback Mekhi Blackmon selected to the third team.

Alabama edge rusher Will Anderson Jr. was selected to the first team for the second straight season, along with Kansas State run-

ning back Deuce Vaughn, who made it as an all-purpose player for the second year in a row.

Joining Williams in the All-America first-team backfield is Texas running back Bijan Robinson and Michigan's Blake Corum.

Michigan also had center Olusegun Oluwatimi and kicker Jake Moody picked for the second team.

The second-ranked Wolverines face No. 3 TCU in the College Football Playoff semifinal at the Fiesta Bowl on Dec. 31. The Horned Frogs' lone first-team All-American was defensive back Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson. TCU quarterback Max Duggan and guard Steve Avila made the second team.

Top-ranked Georgia placed two players on the first-team defense with tackle Jalen Carter and safety Christopher Smith. Tight end Brock Bowers and linebacker Jamon Dumas-Johnson were second-team selections.

The Bulldogs face No. 4 Ohio

AP All America team

FIRST TEAM Offense

Quarterback: Caleb Williams, second-year, Southern California.

Running back: Bijan Robinson, third-year, Texas; Blake Corum, third-year, Michigan.

Tackle: Peter Skoronski, third-year, Northwestern; Joe Alt, second-year, Notre Dame.

Guard: O'Cyrus Torrence, fourth-year, Florida; Andrew Vorhees, sixth-year, Southern California.

Center: John Michael Schmitz, sixth-year, Minnesota.

Tight end: Michael Mayer, third-year, Notre Dame.

Wide receiver: Marvin Harrison Jr., second-year, Ohio State; Jalin Hyatt, third-year, Tennessee; Xavier Hutchinson, third-year, Iowa State.

All-purpose player: Deuce Vaughn, third-year, Kansas State.

Kicker: Christopher Dunn, fifth-year, North Carolina State.

Defense

Edge rusher: Will Anderson Jr., third-year, Alabama; Tuli Tuipulotu, third-year, Southern California.

Tackle: Jalen Carter, third-year, Georgia; Calijah Kancey, fourth-year, Pittsburgh.

Linebacker: Ivan Pace Jr., fourth-year, Cincinnati; Jack Campbell, fourth-year, Iowa; Drew Sanders, third-year, Arkansas.

Cornerback: Clark Phillips III, third-year, Utah; Devon Witherspoon, fourth-year, Illinois.

Safety: Kamren Kinchen, second-year, Miami; Christopher Smith, fifth-year, Georgia.

Defensive back: Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson, fourth-year, TCU.

Punter: Bryce Baringer, sixth-year, Michigan State.

SECOND TEAM Offense

Quarterback: Max Duggan, fourth-year, TCU.

Running back: Chase Brown, fifth-year, Illinois; Mohamed Ibrahim, sixth-year, Minnesota.

Tackle: Paris Johnson Jr., third-year, Ohio State; Dawand Jones, fourth-year, Ohio State.

Guard: Cooper Beebe, fourth-year, Kansas State; Steve Avila, fifth-year, TCU.

Center: Olusegun Oluwatimi, sixth-year, Michigan.

Tight end: Brock Bowers, second-year, Georgia.

Wide receiver: Charlie Jones, sixth-year, Purdue; Rashee Rice, fourth-year, SMU; Josh Downs, third-year, North Carolina.

All-purpose player: Zach Charbonnet, fourth-year, UCLA.

Kicker: Jake Moody, fifth-year, Michigan.

Defense

Edge rusher: Tyree Wilson, fifth-year, Texas Tech; Isaiah Foskey, fourth-year, Notre Dame.

Tackle: Jer'Zhan Newton, third-year, Illinois; Jonah Tavai, fifth-year, San Diego State.

Linebacker: Tommy Eichenberg, fourth-year, Ohio State; Jeremiah Trotter Jr., second-year, Clemson; Jamon Dumas-Johnson, second-year, Georgia.

Cornerback: Emmanuel Forbes, third-year, Mississippi State; Joey Porter Jr., fourth-year, Penn State.

Safety: Kaevon Merriweather, fifth-year, Iowa; Ronnie Hickman, fourth-year, Ohio State.

Defensive back: Brian Branch, third-year, Alabama.

Punter: Tory Taylor, third-year, Iowa.

State in the CFP's Peach Bowl semifinal on New Year's Eve. Wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. was Ohio State's only first-team All-American, but the Buckeyes added four players on the second team: Offensive tackles Paris Johnson Jr. and Dawand Jones, linebacker Tommy Eichenberg and safety Ronnie Hickman.

Air Raid master Leach dies at 61

Coach was 158-107 at 3 schools in 21 seasons; his QBs posted four of the top six passing seasons ever

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

Mike Leach, the gruff, pioneering and unfiltered college football coach who helped revolutionize the game with the Air Raid offense, has died following complications from a heart condition, Mississippi State said Tuesday. He was 61.

Leach, who was in his third season as head coach at Mississippi State, fell ill Sunday at his home in Starkville, Miss. He was treated at a local hospital before being airlifted to University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, about 120 miles away. He died Monday night.

"Mike was a giving and attentive husband, father and grandfather. He was able to participate in organ donation at UMMC as a final act of charity," the family said in a statement issued by Mississippi State. "We are supported and uplifted by the outpouring of love and prayers from family, friends, Mississippi State University, the hospital staff, and football fans around the world. Thank you for sharing in the joy of our beloved husband and father's life."

In 21 seasons as a head coach at Texas Tech, Washington State and Mississippi State, Leach went 158-107.

Leach fought through a bout with pneumonia late in this season, coughing uncontrollably at times during news conferences, but seemed to be improving, according to those who worked with him.

News of him falling gravely ill swept through college football the past few days and left many who knew him stunned, hoping and praying for Leach's recovery under grim circumstances.

His impact on all levels of football — from high school to the NFL

— over the last two decades runs deep and will continue for years to come.

"Mike's keen intellect and unvarnished candor made him one of the nation's true coaching legends," Mississippi State President Mark Keenum said. "His passing brings great sadness to our university, to the Southeastern Conference, and to all who loved college football. I will miss Mike's profound curiosity, his honesty, and his wide-open approach to pursuing excellence in all things."

Leach was known for his pass-happy offense, wide-ranging interests — he wrote a book about Native American leader Geronimo, had a passion for pirates and taught a class about insurgent warfare — and rambling, off-the-cuff news conferences.

An interview with Leach was as likely to veer off into politics, wedding planning or hypothetical mascot fights as it was to stick to football. He considered Donald Trump a friend before the billionaire businessman ran for president and then campaigned for him in 2016.

He traveled all over the world and his curiosity knew no bounds. He most appreciated those who stepped outside of their expertise.

Leach's teams were consistent winners at programs where success did not come easy. And his quarterbacks put up massive passing statistics, running a relatively simple offense called the Air Raid that he did not invent but certainly mastered.

As much as Leach enjoyed digging into topics other than football, he was excellent at the X's and O's.

Six of the 20 best passing seasons in major college football history were by quarterbacks who played for Leach, including four of the top six.

Navy AD gets blunt about expectations for program

By NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

Navy is changing football coaches. What won't be different — according to athletic director Chet Gladchuk — are the expectations for the program.

"Our objective has always been to win the Commander In Chief Trophy, which is reasonable," Gladchuk said Monday. "And then No. 2, you win six games in the year, which essentially is the Commander In Chief Trophy and four games, gets us to six, which gets us in a bowl game. That has been the constant bar that we've strived for, is to

achieve those two goals, which are I believe very realistic."

Navy hasn't achieved either of those goals since 2019, and now Ken Niumatalolo — the winningest coach in the academy's history — is out of a job. That was announced Sunday, and Gladchuk spoke with reporters a day later to explain his thinking.

He was asked if he'd made it clear to Niumatalolo about the standard the coach needed to reach.

"I spoke directly to his representative, who asked me exactly that question," Gladchuk said. "I conveyed it to him, and I also

conveyed it, as I mentioned, for 20 years to the head coach every year."

Hiring a new coach brings a lot of uncertainty to Navy, which went 109-83 in Niumatalolo's 15 seasons. That included 10 bowl appearances.

Navy won the Commander In Chief's Trophy six times in Niumatalolo's tenure.

But Navy has gone just 4-10 against Air Force and Army in the past seven years, and the Midshipmen were 11-23 overall the past three seasons.

After a loss to Air Force last year, the status of longtime offensive coordinator Ivin

Jasper was in limbo. Niumatalolo said Gladchuk decided to fire Jasper, but after further discussion, Jasper remained with the staff in his other role as quarterbacks coach.

There have been occasional promising signs — wins over Central Florida the past two years, for example — but the last game of Niumatalolo's tenure was a double-overtime loss to Army in which both teams struggled to move the ball.

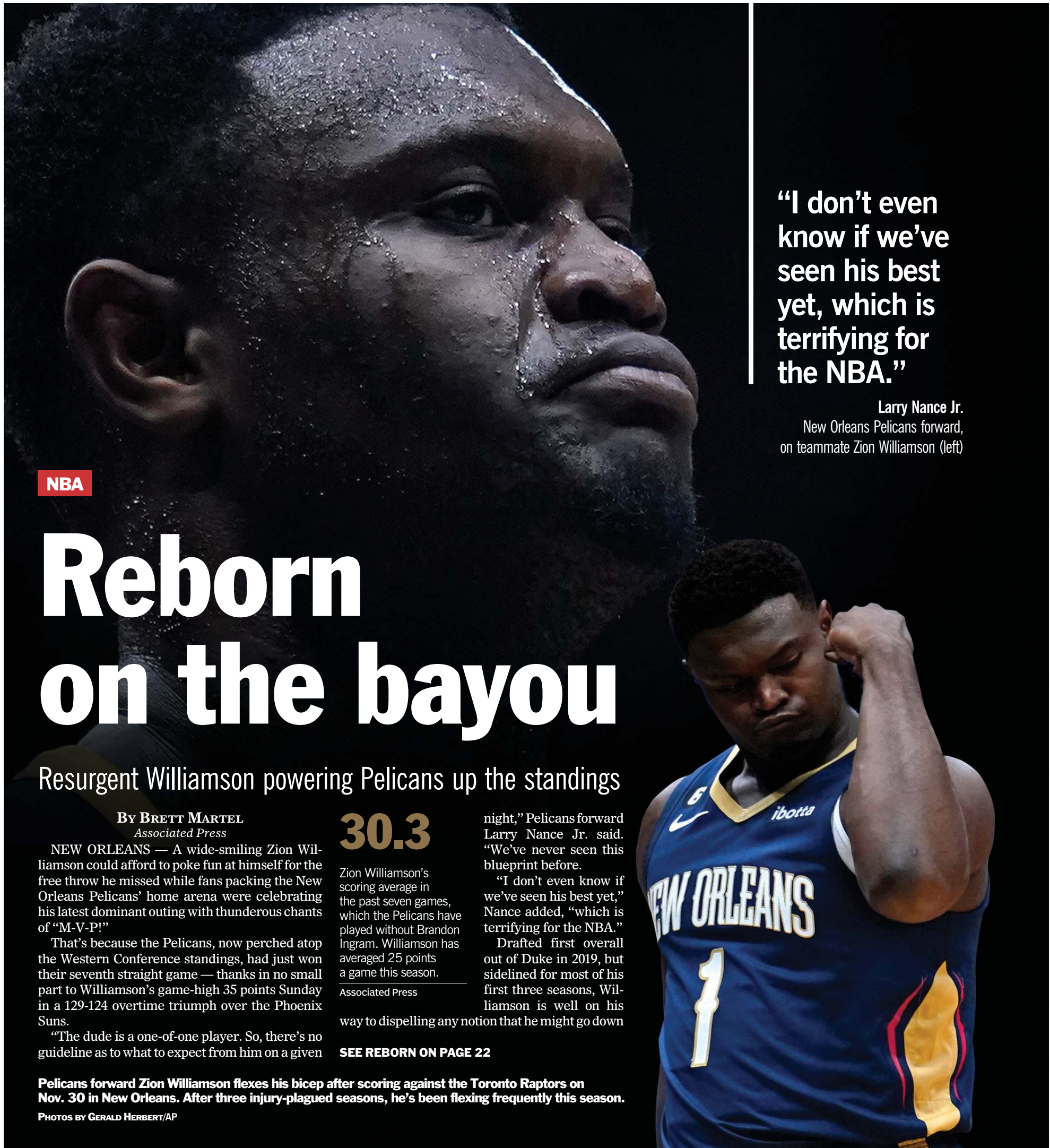
Any coaching change at Navy will raise questions about whether the program will stick to its triple-option offense. Gladchuk said the Midshipmen likely would.

SPORTS



Longtime coach Leach dies

Architect of pass-happy Air Raid offense, 61, had heart condition » College football, Page 23



“I don’t even know if we’ve seen his best yet, which is terrifying for the NBA.”

Larry Nance Jr.
New Orleans Pelicans forward,
on teammate Zion Williamson (left)

NBA

Reborn on the bayou

Resurgent Williamson powering Pelicans up the standings

BY BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A wide-smiling Zion Williamson could afford to poke fun at himself for the free throw he missed while fans packing the New Orleans Pelicans’ home arena were celebrating his latest dominant outing with thunderous chants of “M-V-P!”

That’s because the Pelicans, now perched atop the Western Conference standings, had just won their seventh straight game — thanks in no small part to Williamson’s game-high 35 points Sunday in a 129-124 overtime triumph over the Phoenix Suns.

“The dude is a one-of-one player. So, there’s no guideline as to what to expect from him on a given

30.3

Zion Williamson’s scoring average in the past seven games, which the Pelicans have played without Brandon Ingram. Williamson has averaged 25 points a game this season.

Associated Press

way to dispelling any notion that he might go down

SEE REBORN ON PAGE 22

night,” Pelicans forward Larry Nance Jr. said. “We’ve never seen this blueprint before.

“I don’t even know if we’ve seen his best yet,” Nance added, “which is terrifying for the NBA.”

Drafted first overall out of Duke in 2019, but sidelined for most of his first three seasons, Williamson is well on his

Pelicans forward Zion Williamson flexes his bicep after scoring against the Toronto Raptors on Nov. 30 in New Orleans. After three injury-plagued seasons, he’s been flexing frequently this season.

PHOTOS BY GERALD HERBERT/AP

Cards QB Murray injured in loss to Patriots » NFL, Page 20

