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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 84 Edition 233 ©SS 2026 **MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026** 平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
 発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50 **50¢/Free to Deployed Areas**



Holding strong in Caribbean

5 warships, thousands of troops continue fight on drugs

By **MATTHEW ADAMS**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military continues to maintain a presence in the Caribbean Sea to strike alleged drug traffickers with five warships and thousands of troops.

That does not include the Navy's newest and world's largest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford, which left the region in mid-February and is now operating in the Middle East. The U.S. and Israel launched extensive strikes against Iran on Feb. 28 following months of stalled negotiations over the country's nuclear program.

The Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group is operating in the Caribbean, a Navy official confirmed Thursday. The official was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The Amphibious Ready Group includes the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima and amphibious transport dock ships USS Fort Lauderdale and USS San Antonio.

The guided-missile cruisers USS Gettysburg and USS Lake al-

MAURION MOORE/U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines board a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter aboard the USS San Antonio, while underway in the Caribbean Sea, on Feb. 6. U.S. military forces are deployed to the Caribbean in support of the U.S. Southern Command mission to disrupt illicit drug trafficking.

SEE STRONG ON PAGE 4

DOD expands Stars and Stripes oversight, limits content

By **ROSE L. THAYER**
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon has released a modernization plan for Stars and Stripes that affirms the publication's independence while expanding Defense Department oversight, introducing new restrictions on content and transitioning away from a print publica-

tion.

An eight-page memo, dated March 9 and effective immediately, limits the use of wire services, bars comics and other syndicated features and states that content must be consistent with "good order and discipline," a phrase borrowed from the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The memo is the first formal explanation since Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell said in a Jan. 15 social media post that the Defense Department intended to "refocus" the news organization "from woke distractions that siphon morale."

On Friday, Parnell in a statement provided the first direct

comment to the organization since Jan. 15. He said the department is "returning S&S to its original mission: an independent news source for service members stationed overseas that is by the warfighter and for the warfighter."

Parnell said the effort includes "a transition from print to digital, transition to uniformed staff at lo-

cations outside the continental U.S., and other efficiency measures that will eliminate redundancies and ensure smart use of DOW resources."

Stars and Stripes staff currently includes service members on one- to three-year assignments who

SEE OVERSIGHT ON PAGE 6

BUSINESS/WEATHER

FCC threatens TV broadcast licenses over news coverage

BY **MARÍA PAULA MIJARES TORRES**

Bloomberg News

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr threatened broadcasters with cancellation of their licenses if they did not “correct course” on news coverage.

“Broadcasters that are running hoaxes and news distortions — also known as the fake news — have a chance now to correct course before their license renewals come up,” Carr said in a social media

post Saturday. “The law is clear. Broadcasters must operate in the public interest, and they will lose their licenses if they do not.”

Carr posted his warning on top of a post from President Donald Trump complaining about coverage of the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has also criticized outlets for war coverage that he said “makes the president look bad.”

It’s Carr’s latest threat against television broadcasters after Trump has expressed displeasure

with coverage, or with a particular reporter or late-night talk-show host. Trump has suggested that networks should lose their broadcast license due to unfair coverage. Such licenses don’t apply to cable, streaming or print outlets.

The FCC doesn’t directly license the national networks themselves, and therefore can’t bring enforcement actions against them directly. Individual local stations do hold FCC licenses and are legally responsible for complying with the agency’s rules.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 16)	0.85
British pound (March 16)	\$1.29
Japanese yen (March 16)	155.00
South Korean won (March 16)	1451.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3757
Britain (Pound)	1.3236
Canada (Dollar)	1.3807
China (Yuan)	6.8961
Denmark (Krone)	6.5446
Egypt (Pound)	52.1905
Euro	0.8719
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8309
Hungary (Forint)	343.54
Israel (Shekel)	3.1428
Japan (Yen)	159.74
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3069
Norway (Krone)	9.7301
Philippines (Peso)	58.15
Poland (Zloty)	3.7447
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7483
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2811
South Korea (Won)	1501.85

Switzerland (Franc)	0.7957
Thailand (Baht)	32.37
Turkey (NewLira)	44.1817

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

INTEREST RATES

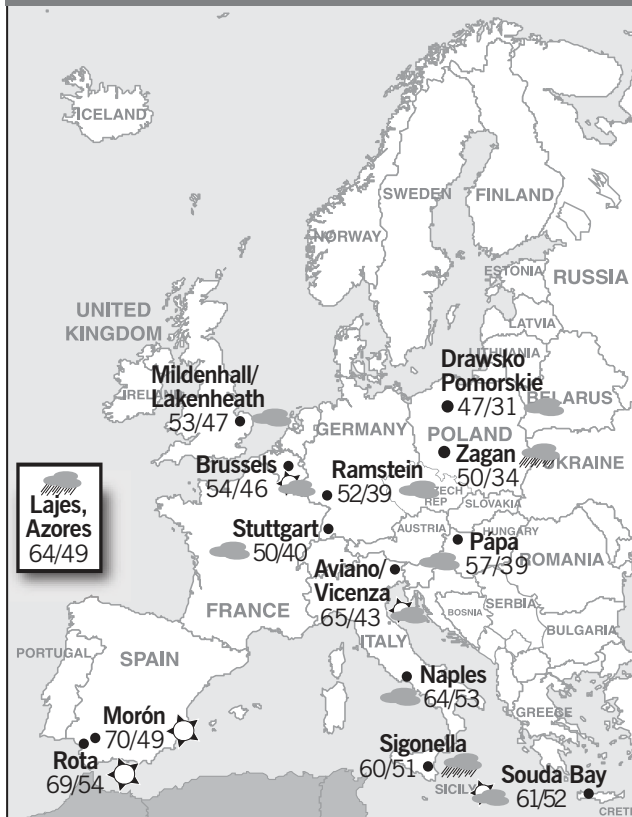
Prime rate	6.75
Interest Rates Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	3.62
3-month bill	3.69
30-year bond	4.91

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE



TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



This weather is compiled from weather.com reports.

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MILITARY

House bill aims to exempt drill pay from taxes

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A new House bill is seeking to exempt pay earned by members of the National Guard and Reserve during their drill weekends from federal income taxes.

The legislation, introduced by Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., would ensure Inactive Duty Training pay, which service members receive during drills they typically take part in one weekend a month, would not be taxed federally.

Current law requires guardsmen and reservists to pay federal income taxes on compensation for drills as well as additional readiness activities throughout the year.

Barr said ending federal taxes on such pay will reward the more than 800,000 members of the Guard and Reserve who balance civilian careers and family re-

sponsibilities with military service and provide other benefits for the military.

“The No Tax on Drill Pay Act will boost recruitment and retention, strengthen military readiness, and continue our commitment to treating our military better than any in the world,” he said in a statement.

Lawmakers have floated several measures in recent years to make military pay tax-free, including a sweeping proposal late last year to eliminate federal income tax on all active-duty and reserve pay, including enlistment, retention and education bonuses and all special and incentive pays.

Republican Reps. Max Miller of Ohio, a former member of the Marine Corps Reserve, and Zach Nunn of Iowa, a colonel in the Iowa Air National Guard, originally cosponsored a bill focused on drill pay that Barr has now reintro-



BRADFORD LEIGHTON/U.S. National Guard

Spc. Jaden Simos, right, checks Pfc. Joel Ocon while Spc. Simon Rupniewski, left, applies a tourniquet. The soldiers were training in a casualty drill on March 7, in La Grange Park, Ill.

duced.

Nunn said he often hears complaints from Iowa guardsmen and their families about the financial strain of serving part time in the military while holding full-time civilian jobs.

“If we truly value the service of our Guardsmen and reservists, the least we can do is let them keep every dollar they earn while

preparing to defend our country,” said Miller.

The National Guard Association of the United States has endorsed the legislation, saying it will help recruit and retain the force and provide recognition for the time citizen-soldiers and airmen spend training for emergencies at home and deployments abroad.

Dems file war powers resolution over Cuba

BY STEPHEN GROVES
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats have filed legislation that would prevent the U.S. from attacking Cuba without congressional approval as they seek to force a vote on President Donald Trump’s stated goal of a “takeover” of the Caribbean country.

Democrats have repeatedly used war powers resolutions to force debate on Trump’s foreign policy moves, though Republicans have so far mostly backed the president. The resolution filed Thursday by Democratic Sens. Tim Kaine, Ruben Gallego and Adam Schiff would require the president to remove the military from any hostilities with Cuba and could potentially receive a vote by the end of the month.

“Only Congress has the power to declare war under the Constitution, but he operates with the belief that the U.S. military is a palace guard, ordering military action in the Caribbean, Venezuela, and Iran without Congress’ authorization or any explanation for his actions to the American people,” Kaine said in a statement.

Trump said earlier in the week that Secretary of State Marco Rubio was negotiating with Cuba’s leadership as the country faces a crippling energy crisis that has been exacerbated by a U.S. blockade of the island.

“It may be a friendly takeover, it may not be a friendly takeover,” Trump told reporters at a news conference in Florida. He added that he and Rubio would focus on that goal after the war with Iran.

The U.S. for decades has had a tense relationship with Cuba, but Trump’s turn to using military action to take out foreign opponents has raised anticipations that the island could be next. Rubio, whose family immigrated to the U.S. from Cuba in the 1950s, has long pushed for the U.S. to aggressively oppose the Caribbean nation’s leadership.

Rubio told senators earlier this year that the Trump administration would “love” to see regime change in Cuba, but cautioned that “does not mean we are going to provoke it directly.” Republicans in Congress have mostly stood behind the Trump administration’s aggressive foreign policy. However, Democrats have turned repeatedly to war powers resolutions in order to force debates over how Trump can use military force in foreign nations. They have not succeeded in passing any of the resolutions so far.

Commander’s promotion OK’d despite retaliation finding

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate Commerce Committee voted along party lines Thursday to advance the promotion of a Coast Guard commander who was found to have retaliated against a subordinate for filing a whistleblower complaint.

Cmdr. Jesse Millard’s promotion divided the panel, with Democrats voicing concerns over a Department of Homeland Security internal watchdog report that confirmed Millard had bullied a former professor at the Coast Guard Academy and violated whistleblower protection laws by giving her unusually low evaluation marks.

Committee members voted 15-13 to promote Millard to captain. The promotion next heads to the full Senate for consideration.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., said promoting Millard would be a step in the wrong direction after the reforms enacted in the wake of Operation Fouled Anchor, a series of investigations into the mishandling of sexual assault allegations at the academy that the Coast Guard had kept secret, including from Congress.

“If we intend to ensure there is accountability, then this committee cannot allow the promotion of

officers into the Coast Guard senior ranks who have substantiated claims of retaliation in their records,” she said.

Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington, the top Democrat on the panel, noted that the whistleblower case against Millard was one of only 11 that the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General had found valid out of more than 3,100 complaints filed in recent years.

Former Coast Guard Cmdr. Kimberly McLear lodged several complaints between July 2015 and January 2017 accusing Millard of harassing her when he was her boss.

The inspector general confirmed in 2018 that Millard and other officers had acted inappropriately and found that Millard had retaliated against her when she spoke out.

The public version of the report redacted Millard’s name and its findings were not included in his personnel file when he was promoted to commander in 2019.

In 2024, a form known as “Page 7” reflecting the findings was added to Millard’s file after Commerce Committee staff became aware of the watchdog report and notified the Coast Guard, according to congressional aides.

Millard’s name was subse-

quently taken off a list of commanders to be promoted to captain.

In December 2024, Millard requested that an internal Coast Guard review board remove the negative “Page 7” from his file, according to congressional aides. The request was granted in April 2025, and he was again nominated for promotion in February.

Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, the Republican chairman of the Commerce Committee, maintained Thursday that Millard had “done nothing wrong other than obey orders and display honesty and integrity.”

He accused Democrats of attempting to kill Millard’s career and tarnish his reputation and described Millard’s accuser — McLear — as a “serial complainant” who filed repeated unsubstantiated accusations of discrimination and other charges against multiple senior officers.

“At some point, when the complaints are against everyone, the problem isn’t the coworkers or the managers,” he said, later adding, “The real victim here, unfortunately, is Cmdr. Millard, whose reputation is being unfairly tarnished.”

McLear, responding to Cruz’s comments after the vote, said, “my professional record stands.”

She said the committee’s decision to move forward with Millard’s promotion was “really devastating” and “incredibly disheartening.”

“I think it sends a chilling message to everyone who’s come forward, survivors and victims, who have experienced retaliation and have never seen any accountability,” McLear said.

McLear wrote a letter to Cruz and Cantwell on March 2 urging them to reject Millard’s promotion.

The committee was set to vote on Millard’s nomination on March 4 in its normal committee hearing room but moved the proceedings to an ornate room in the Capitol, without a live video feed, on Thursday.

“This is the first time that we have knowledge of that we’ve ever had a roll call vote on a Coast Guard nominee,” said a Democratic committee aide, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said Friday that the department strongly supports Millard’s nomination, citing his “23 years of distinguished and honorable service.” It cast the attacks against him as “nothing more than a politicized hit job.”

MILITARY

Marines assist injured woman in Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Two Marines out for an evening run last month provided aid to a Japanese woman who suffered chest trauma in a car accident on a busy thoroughfare in central Okinawa.

Cpl. Joseph Lahann, of Kansas City, Mo., and Lance Cpl. Isaac Sanchez, of El Paso, Texas, were running southbound along Camp Foster's perimeter around 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 16 when they heard two vehicles colliding in the northbound lane of Route 58.

The pair said their Marine training kept them focused as they sprang into action.

"You do what's right because it's right and that's the only reason you should be," Sanchez told Stars and Stripes on Thursday at 3rd Network Battalion headquarters. He and Lahann are both cyber analysts with the battalion.

"It's one of our core values in honor," Sanchez added. "We do the right thing the right way for the right reasons. All three of those matter."

The crash happened behind the Marines. When they looked back, they saw damaged pink and black



BRIAN McELHINEY/Stars and Stripes

Cpl. Joseph Lahann, left, and Lance Cpl. Isaac Sanchez, cyber analysts with 3rd Network Battalion, describe a recent vehicle collision during an interview Thursday at Camp Foster, Okinawa.

kei cars blocking an intersection in front of a car dealership.

One of the vehicles had attempted a right turn while traveling south on Route 58 and collided with the other in the northbound lane, an Okinawa city police spokesman said Thursday. Both drivers suffered minor injuries.

As Lahann called the off-base emergency number, Sanchez assisted the woman, who was driving the pink car and spoke some English. Sanchez saw no bleeding, but the woman complained of chest pain and had abrasions on her forearms.

He said he helped her lie down

away from the curb and asked her name and if she knew where she was to keep her awake.

A man in his early 30s was driving the black car and did not appear injured. Sanchez tried to get him to sit on the curb, but he would not stay still.

The police spokesman declined

to say who was driving which car and could not confirm the Marines' involvement. Some Japanese government officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

Police and emergency services arrived about 15 minutes later. In the interim, Lahann and Sanchez directed other drivers who had stopped to help watch over the man and woman.

"When EMS got there, it felt like I had been there for an entire day," Sanchez said.

Both Marines will be "officially recognized in some form" by their battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman 1st Lt. Jordan Holland said Thursday.

Sanchez and Lahann "demonstrated the initiative and character we value in every Marine here in 3d Network Battalion," battalion commander Lt. Col. Daniel Chamberlin said in a statement relayed in Holland's email. "... Their actions serve as a powerful example of how our Marines contribute to the Marine Corps and the local community, both on and off duty."

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.

Strong: 'Armed conflict' continues

FROM PAGE 1

so are patrolling the region as part of Operation Southern Spear, the official said.

The 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit also is part of the group, which includes more than 4,500 Marines and sailors, according to the Navy.

As of late 2025 and early 2026, there were as many as 11 warships and as many as 10,000 troops.

Shortly after taking office, President Donald Trump designated several drug cartels as terrorist organizations, including Venezuela's Tren de Aragua. His administration has asserted that the U.S. is in an "armed conflict" with cartels and will treat their members as "unlawful combatants." The administration, however, has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

The death toll from the Trump administration's campaign against alleged traffickers has risen to at least 157 people since the strikes began in early September in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific Ocean.

In October, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced the deployment of the USS Gerald R. Ford, along with accompanying ships USS Mahan, USS Bainbridge and USS Winston S. Churchill, to the Caribbean. At the time,



SHARON ERRISURIZ/U.S. Marines

U.S. Marines load onto a U.S. Navy landing craft aboard Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima, during operations while underway in the Caribbean Sea, March 7.

nearly 20% of the Navy's deployed warships were concentrated in the region.

The destroyers USS Gravely and USS Stockdale were also previously patrolling the region. The official would not speak about their locations.

The U.S. resumed strikes in late January after largely backing off in the region following the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on Jan. 3.

Trump said at a regional summit in Doral, Fla., on March 7 that the U.S. and Latin American coun-

tries are collaborating to combat cartels and encouraged the use of military force.

"The only way to defeat these enemies is by unleashing the power of our militaries," the president said during the "Shield of the Americas" summit. "We have to use our military. You have to use your military."

The summit came a day after U.S. Southern Command said it supported Ecuadorian forces in operations against "Designated Terrorist Organizations" within the country.

Marine will not appeal attempted sexual assault conviction in Japan

By BRIAN McELHINEY

AND KEISHI KOJA

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A U.S. Marine convicted of strangling and attempting to sexually assault a woman at her Okinawa home in May 2024 will forgo a final appeal and serve the remainder of his seven-year sentence in a Japanese prison.

Lance Cpl. Jamel Clayton, 23, of Ohio, declined through his attorney Kotaro Ito to appeal his conviction and sentence to Japan's Supreme Court, a spokeswoman for the Naha branch of Fukuoka High Court said by phone Friday.

The court accepted the decision on Wednesday, the clerk said.

She did not know the reason for Clayton's decision.

A three-judge panel accompanied by six lay judges in Naha District Court convicted Clayton on June 24 of nonconsensual sexual intercourse resulting in injury.

A separate three-judge panel upheld the verdict in the Naha branch of Fukuoka High Court on March 5.

Ito could not be reached by phone Friday.

The Supreme Court is the final venue for appeals in Japan's

three-tier court system.

The district court ruling cited the woman's testimony.

She testified June 3 that Clayton followed her into a taxi from Gate 2 Street to Yomitan village.

He then choked her to unconsciousness several times, unsuccessfully attempted to unzip her pants and masturbated behind her in the entryway of the home she shared with her then-boyfriend, a U.S. airman, according to her testimony.

Clayton testified June 5 that he was invited to share the taxi and to enter the home.

Clayton's case, and that of Senior Airman Brennon Washington, convicted in December 2024 of sexually assaulting a minor, fueled public backlash and protests from Okinawa's government.

In response to the backlash, the U.S. military imposed tighter liberty restrictions for troops in Japan.

The Supreme Court dismissed Washington's final appeal on Jan. 30.

Two other U.S. service members stationed on Okinawa have also been indicted on separate sexual assault charges.

PACIFIC

N. Korea's Kim observes drill with daughter

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, accompanied by his teenage daughter, observed a live-fire test of multiple rocket launch systems, state media reported Sunday, a likely response to ongoing U.S.-South Korean military training that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

The official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim watched the strike drill involving twelve 600mm-calibre, ultraprecision rocket launchers off North Korea's east coast on Saturday.

South Korea's military said Saturday it detected about 10 ballistic missiles fired from North Korea's capital region toward the eastern sea. South Korea's national security council called the launches a provocation that violated U.N. Security Council resolutions that bans any ballistic activities by North Korea.

KCNA cited Kim as saying that the drill would expose enemies within the 260-mile striking range, to "uneasiness" and give them "a deep understanding of the destructive power of tactical nuclear weapon," KCNA said. He apparently referred to South Korea

and U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.

"If this weapon is used, the opponent's military infrastructure within its striking range can never survive," Kim said, according to KCNA.

KCNA photos showed Kim and his daughter, reportedly named Kim Ju Ae and aged about 13, walking near huge olive-green launch trucks and looking at weapons being launched from them. The girl has been accompanying her father at numerous high-profile events like missile tests and military parades since late 2022, stoking outside speculation that she's being groomed as his heir.

Experts say North Korea's large-sized rocket launchers blur the boundaries between artillery systems and ballistic missiles because they can create their own thrust and are guided during delivery. North Korea has said some of these systems are capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

The springtime U.S.-South Korean Freedom Shield training, a computer-simulated command post exercise, is to run through March 19. North Korea often reacts to the exercise with its own weapons tests and fiery rhetoric.



PHOTOS FROM KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY, KOREA NEWS SERVICE/AP

Kim Jong Un, center right, and his daughter, center left, attend a live-fire test of multiple rocket launch systems, at an undisclosed place in North Korea on Saturday.

Pyongyang warns Tokyo over missiles that could reach China, North Korea

By **YOOJIN LEE**
Stars and Stripes

North Korea on Friday condemned Japan's plan to deploy upgraded long-range missiles across the country, calling the move a dangerous military escalation, according to the communist regime's state-run media.

The criticism was reported by the Korean Central News Agency, which said the deployments would allow Japan to target neighboring countries from multiple locations.

The missile deployments are "undoubtedly an extremely dangerous military act," KCNA said. "If this becomes reality, Japan would be deploying missiles capable of targeting neighboring countries across the entire na-

tion."

Japan's Ministry of Defense announced Monday that a Type-12 missile unit will be deployed by March 31 to Camp Kengun on Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands.

Tokyo also plans to station a Type-12 unit at Camp Fuji by March 2028 and deploy high-velocity gliding missiles to that site beginning this month.

The upgraded Type-12 has a range of about 620 miles and can be launched from land, sea or air platforms, according to Japanese defense officials. From Kyushu, the upgraded weapon could reach parts of China's coastline and North Korea.

Japan insists its missiles are for "defensive purposes" but are ca-

pable of extended range and multiple operational roles, according to KCNA.

"Despite strong concerns and criticism from the public, if Japan continues to act inappropriately and recklessly as it is now, it will inevitably cross the 'red line' that will bring themselves into 'submergence,'" KCNA said.

Japan has expanded its missile defenses in recent years as tension rises with both China and North Korea.

North Korea twice so far this month has test-launched cruise missiles from a new destroyer, along with separate tests in January and December. It launched a ballistic missile east over the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea, in November.



This photo provided by the North Korean government shows a test of multiple rocket launch systems.

Taiwan reports large-scale Chinese military aircraft presence

By **KANIS LEUNG**
Associated Press

HONG KONG — Taiwan saw a surge of Chinese military planes near the island, its defense ministry said Sunday, after a sharp drop in flights over the past two weeks had sparked discussions among observers.

The ministry detected 26 Chinese military aircraft around the island on Saturday, with 16 of them entering its northern, central and southwestern Air Defense Identification Zone. Seven naval ships were spotted around

the island, it reported.

The increased number of aircraft came after the ministry reported a fall that left analysts scratching their heads about what China's military may be up to.

Taiwan didn't report any Chinese military planes that went beyond the median line and entered the zone for a week from Feb. 27 to March 5. After two were detected on March 6, the next four days had none. Such flights resumed in small numbers between Wednesday and Friday.

The drop coincided with the an-

nual meeting of China's legislature. While such flights have fallen in the past during major events and public holidays, this year's fall was more prominent than in the past.

Analysts said the meeting could not be the sole reason behind the recent drop. Another potential factor could be a desire to calm the waters with Washington weeks before a visit by President Donald Trump. The White House has said that Trump would travel to China from March 31 to April 2, though Beijing has not officially

confirmed that.

Some observers also suggested the decline may be driven by a shift to a next phase in China's military training and modernization, with the army appearing to be exploring a new model for joint training between its forces.

China has vowed to seize the island, by force if necessary. Over the years, Beijing has sent warplanes and navy vessels toward the island on a near-daily basis.

Taiwan's military previously signaled that it wasn't changing its defense posture because of the

falloff in Chinese warplane activity.

Defense Minister Wellington Koo earlier noted that China's navy has remained active in nearby waters, even as military flights have fallen off.

China and Taiwan have been governed separately since 1949, when the Communist Party rose to power in Beijing following a civil war. Defeated Nationalist Party forces fled to Taiwan, which later transitioned from martial law to multiparty democracy.

MILITARY

Oversight: Nonprofit decries 'obstacles' to 'credible reporting'

FROM PAGE 1

are mentored by civilian journalists. The service members are typically trained by the services in public relations.

Parnell did not answer questions about how his office is coordinating with the news organization to implement these changes or if the decisions are based on any formal review or evaluation of Stars and Stripes operations.

No coordination

Stars and Stripes Publisher Max Lederer told U.S.-based staff of the memo Thursday and said he would begin meeting with the organization's leadership to discuss implementation of the memo.

Lederer said he has not been contacted directly by anyone from the Pentagon about the changes, despite reaching out to them. The memo, which was sent to Pentagon leaders and combatant commanders, was written without Stars and Stripes' input.

Stars and Stripes was not notified about publication of the memo, which was found during a search on a DOD website.

"It is unlikely that the Pentagon was aware of the extensive modernization that Stars and Stripes had already begun," Erik Slavin, Stars and Stripes editor in chief, said in a statement Thursday. "Over the past year, the changes to our digitally produced news and information have resulted in significant increases in pageviews, engagement and subscribers."

Reader feedback and real-world usage drove the efforts, said Slavin, who became the organization's top editor late last year after more than 20 years stationed with the company in Japan, Iraq, South Korea and Germany.

Business operations and funding remain largely unchanged by the memo.

Moves called 'A threat to the First Amendment'

Press freedom advocates said the memo shifts authority over content decisions in a way that risks undermining the newsroom's independence.

"This clearly shows that the Pentagon is trying to increase its



Reader-submitted photo

A service member reads Stars and Stripes in 2024. A memo posted by the Pentagon on March 9 affirmed the independence of the publication while announcing new restrictions.

influence over content decisions at Stars and Stripes," said Timothy Richardson, program director of journalism and disinformation for PEN America, a nonprofit that protects free expression.

"That's a threat to the First Amendment, certainly, and the independence that the Congress has long guaranteed for the newsroom," he said Thursday after reviewing the memo.

PEN America and five other press-freedom organizations sent a letter to Congress last month in support of Stars and Stripes' editorial independence.

Stars and Stripes, which is owned by the Defense Department, was first published by Union troops during the Civil War and has been published continuously since World War II. The newspaper publishes print edi-

tions overseas and a U.S. weekly edition. It distributes to combat zones as needed.

Its website and other digital offerings have gained readership among troops stationed across the U.S. and among veterans.

The news organization has been threatened with closure over the years but has repeatedly garnered support from veterans and bipartisan members of Congress.

The Pentagon in January withdrew a federal regulation that underpinned the mandate set by Congress for Stars and Stripes to provide independent journalism to the military community under the principles of the First Amendment.

The new memo confirmed that Stars and Stripes' editorial operations are "independent of the military chain of command, military public affairs activities or

other external influences," but makes no mention of First Amendment freedoms.

It moves the defense secretary's public affairs office into an oversight role. Previous guidance gave it an administrative role to help with funding, military manning and other regulatory steps.

It also calls for an advisory board of Defense Department personnel.

Content overhaul

The memo bars purchased content on the assumption that all service members overseas have online access to all commercially available news on their own. Exceptions for purchased content can be approved by Parnell, according to the memo.

Stars and Stripes uses wire services to provide more complete world coverage of interest to the military community.

Jacqueline Smith, Stars and Stripes' ombudsman, said wire services add value because they fill gaps and make a news outlet a "one-stop shop."

"A complete newspaper should include national sports and entertainment ...," she said. "Stripes does not have the resources to do its own reporting in those areas. Yet sports and entertainment contribute to the morale of troops."

Losing this "will reduce the quality and breadth of information available to readers," Slavin said.

The memo calls on Stars and Stripes to be a "hometown-style" publication for the increasingly niche U.S. military community" and says it "should" republish content created by the Defense Department public affairs offices with a label describing its origin, though it grants the publisher latitude to determine whether such content serves readers' needs.

The memo does not specify which publications should include public affairs content.

"We have no plans to commingle military public relations offerings with our independent reporting," Slavin said. "Stars and Stripes remains committed to balanced and accurate reporting on

behalf of the military community we serve."

Other changes require the ombudsman to send information bound for Congress through the Defense Department Legislative Affairs Office.

"The House Armed Services Committee created the independent position in 1990-91 with the requirement the ombudsman report to the committee on matters of importance to maintaining Stripes editorial independence," Smith said. "If that report must go through the Pentagon's legislative affairs staff, then there is no assurance it would be complete and unchanged and there would be no opportunity to ask the ombudsman questions."

The memo also bars reporters from requesting public records through the Freedom of Information Act in an official capacity and prohibits the organization from publishing "controlled unclassified information." This label has often been used to limit the release of information under broadly defined terms.

Last year, the Pentagon asked all reporters working within the building to sign a pledge that included a similar demand. Dozens of journalists turned in their access badges, while a new group of reporters signed the agreement and replaced them.

"The obstacles that the Pentagon continues to throw in the way of credible reporting are growing, and [the memo] is another clear example of that," Richardson said.

As plans to change the publication come together, Slavin said readers will be informed at each step.

"We will let readers, particularly print readers in remote locations and situations where unsecure internet is spotty or prohibited, know that comics, national sports, state-by-state roundups and other content may soon no longer be published due to the limits of the memo. Feedback from deployed troops tells us that this will not be a popular decision," he said.

Army CID seeks info about possible crimes committed by veteran

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

The Army Criminal Investigation Division believes that a retired soldier recently indicted on charges of sexual abuse of children may have additional victims from his time in service. It is asking people to submit any information that could help investigators.

A federal grand jury in Arizona indicted Larry Alexander Greenlee Jr. in December on three charges of the sexual exploitation of three children, according to

court records. The alleged crimes occurred in 2014 and 2018 in Arizona and California and in 2023 in Japan.

The retired sergeant first class is accused of twice transporting someone under 18 years old across state lines with the intent the young person would engage in illegal sexual activity and then for traveling to Japan to have illicit sex with someone under age, according to court records.

An attorney was not listed for Greenlee, and he has no upcoming

court dates scheduled.

Greenlee enlisted in the Army in November 1983 and retired from active duty in December 2003, according to his official service record. His occupational specialties included intelligence analyst and cannon crew member. He deployed to southwest Asia in April 1991 and again in March 2003.

After retirement he continued to work as a contractor and a civilian employee of the Army until his arrest in the Philippines.

During his military and civilian

service, Greenlee was stationed at various locations, including Japan; Germany; England; Fort Huachuca, Ariz.; Fort Irwin, Calif.; and Fort Hood, Texas, according to CID.

"Investigators believe that additional victims may exist," according to a statement from CID. "Army CID requests that anyone who believes they may have been victimized by Greenlee, or who has information related to potential misconduct, contact investigators."

Along with the request, CID re-

leased photos of Greenlee to show what he looked like at different times in his life.

People with information should contact the Army CID Far East Field office by email at FEFO-Tips@army.mil. Anonymous tips may be submitted at www.p3tips.com/armycid.

"The information provided could be vital in ongoing investigative efforts. Identified victims may be eligible for certain services and rights under federal and/or state law," according to CID.

MILITARY

ROTC students stop shooter at Va. university

Associated Press

A former Army National Guard member who had spent eight years in prison for attempting to aid the Islamic State opened fire on a classroom at Virginia's Old Dominion University on Thursday before ROTC students subdued and killed him, authorities said.

He had yelled "Allahu Akbar" before the shooting, which left one person dead and two wounded, according to the FBI.

Dominique Evans, special agent in charge of the FBI's Norfolk field office, said at a news conference that the Reserve Officers' Training Corps students showed "extreme bravery and courage" and prevented further loss of life by stopping the gunman, Mohamed Bailor Jalloh.

The students subdued him and "rendered him no longer alive," Evans said. "I don't know how else to say it." She confirmed Jalloh wasn't shot but didn't provide further details.

The campus shooting is being investigated as an act of terrorism, FBI Director Kash Patel said on social media.

Evans said Jalloh aspired to conduct a terrorist attack like the 2009 killings at Fort Hood.

Jalloh had pleaded guilty in 2016 to attempting to aid the Islamic State and was sentenced to 11 years in prison.

He was on supervised release, which is comparable to probation, when he carried out the attack on Thursday. It wasn't immediately clear why his release from prison had been moved up.

Inmates can get time off of their sentences for a variety of reasons, but it isn't known if that happened in this case.

Ashraf Nubani, a Virginia attorney who represented Jalloh in his 2016 criminal case, said in a statement that he'd had no recent contact with Jalloh and had no information about Thursday's events. "Any loss of life is tragic, and violence against innocent people is completely contrary to Islamic teachings and basic human morality," Nubani added.

Jalloh's sister, Fatmatu Jalloh of Sterling, Va., said Thursday she knew nothing about the attack. She said she last saw her brother two days earlier.

"I have no idea what is going on," she said. "I know nothing. I don't even know who to call."

Old Dominion University Police Chief Garrett Shelton said less than 10 minutes passed between when officers were called about a shooting in the university's business school building and when responders determined the shooter was dead.

Shelton said authorities hadn't yet fully determined the shooter's cause of death. He did not confirm whether any officers fired a weapon.

Lt. Col. Jimmy Delongchamp, public information officer for the U.S. Army Cadet Command at Fort Knox, Ky., told the Associated Press that two of the people who were shot were part of the Army ROTC at ODU.

Voorhees University in South Carolina confirmed the victim who died was Lt. Col. Brandon



KENDALL WARNER, THE (NORFOLK, VA.) VIRGINIAN-PILOT/AP

Police arrive outside Old Dominion University's campus after reports of an active shooter on Thursday, in Norfolk, Va.

Shah, the son-in-law of a Voorhees trustee.

Shah attended ODU as an ROTC student, according to his biography on the university's website, and had returned in 2022 as a leader for the program.

In the Army, Shah had flown helicopters over Iraq, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe as a pilot.

Jalloh is a naturalized U.S. citizen from Sierra Leone.

The Virginia Army National Guard confirmed he served as a specialist from 2009 until 2015, when he was honorably discharged.

According to a 2016 FBI affidavit filed in his criminal case, Jalloh told a government informant he quit the National Guard after hearing lectures from radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki.

A court affidavit recounts a three-month sting operation in which Jalloh, then 26, said he was thinking about carrying out an attack similar to the 2009 shootings at Fort Hood, which left 13 people dead. Authorities launched the 2016 operation after Jalloh made

contact with Islamic State members in Africa earlier that year.

Jalloh later told the informant that ISIS had asked if he wanted to participate in an attack. He tried to donate \$500 to ISIS, but the money actually went to an account controlled by the FBI, according to court documents.

Jalloh then tried to buy an AR-15 assault rifle from a Virginia gun store but was turned away because he lacked the proper paperwork. He returned the next day and bought a different assault rifle that was rendered inoperable before he left the store, prosecutors said. He was arrested the following day.

The Justice Department in 2017 requested a 20-year prison sentence for Jalloh, noting that he had attempted to acquire a gun to carry out a murder plot in the United States.

Jalloh's lawyers requested a 6½-year prison sentence and placement in a facility with residential drug abuse treatment.

U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady, an appointee of former

President George W. Bush, sentenced him instead to 11 years in prison with credit for time served and five years of supervised release. He also ordered Jalloh to participate in programs for substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Based on his release date, he would have been under supervised release until 2029.

One of the people wounded has since been released from the hospital while Sentara Health said the other person is in fair condition.

The public university in Norfolk canceled classes and suspended operations on its main campus through Friday.

In a message to the university community, ODU President Brian Hemphill expressed gratitude for the swift emergency response and extended his thoughts and prayers to those impacted.

The school in coastal Norfolk has about 24,000 students and says nearly 30% of its students are military-affiliated.

Old Dominion University shooting victim was decorated vet

BY TREVOR METCALFE

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

The man killed in a shooting at Old Dominion University Thursday flew Apache helicopters in Iraq, earned numerous awards for his military service and helped grow the university's ROTC program enrollment by almost 50% in one year.

Lt. Col. Brandon Shah, 41, was killed in a shooting at ODU that injured two other people.

Multiple elected officials, including Gov. Abigail Spanberger and U.S. Rep. Jen Kiggans, identified Shah as the person killed in what the FBI has la-

beled an act of terrorism.

Shah, a Virginia native, was head of ODU's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps program. He was professor of military sciences and



Shah

joined the university in 2022. As head of the university's ROTC program, Shah grew the program by nearly 50% — from 95 to nearly 140 members — during his first year, according to an ODU profile. He said he enjoyed

seeing his cadets transition from students to "soldier-leaders," likening the moment to a light bulb turning on.

"We do in one office everything the university does," Shah was quoted as saying in the profile. "We recruit. We train. We educate. We develop."

Shah enlisted in the Army in 2003. He achieved a dream of being a pilot, flying aircraft like the AH64 Apache attack helicopter over Iraq, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe during Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Atlantic Resolve. He flew more than 1,200 hours, 600

of them on combat missions, in three aircraft.

Shah also received numerous military commendations, including two Bronze Stars.

Shah enrolled in ODU in 2005. He both received his Army commission and graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science in sociology with a minor in military science.

He later earned both a Master of Business Administration from the University of Georgia and a Master of Science in engineering management from the University of Kansas.

At ODU, Shah helped reintro-

duce a university tradition in 2023: an annual rappelling exercise, where cadets zip down the side of S.B. Ballard Stadium strapped into harnesses. Shah was also an advocate for minority and veteran business education, according to the ODU Alumni Association.

In a Thursday social media post, Spanberger said she was saddened by his death and praying for his family.

"A devoted ROTC instructor, Lt. Col. Shah didn't just lead a life of service to our country, he taught and led others to follow that path," Spanberger said.

MIDEAST

'He was proud to put his uniform on and serve'

Pentagon identifies 6 airmen lost in KC-135 crash in Iraq

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon on Saturday identified six airmen killed when their KC-135 Stratotanker crashed in western Iraq while supporting Operation Epic Fury, the U.S. campaign with Israel against Iran.

The airmen were Maj. John A. Klinner, 33, of Auburn, Ala.; Capt. Ariana G. Savino, 31, of Covington, Wash.; and Tech. Sgt. Ashley B. Pruitt, 34, of Bardstown, Ky. — who were assigned to the 6th Air Refueling Wing at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida — and Capt. Seth R. Koval, 38, of Mooresville, Ind.; Capt. Curtis J. Angst, 30, of Wilmington, Ohio; and Tech. Sgt. Tyler H. Simmons, 28, of Columbus, Ohio — who were assigned to the 121st Air Refueling Wing at Rickensacker Air National Guard Base in Ohio.

The refueling aircraft went down in friendly airspace at about 2 p.m. Eastern time on Thursday. The circumstances of the crash remain under investigation, though U.S. Central Command said it was not caused by hostile or friendly fire.

Klinner — a pilot from Alabama who was promoted in January — had been deployed for less than a week when the crash occurred, his

brother-in-law, James Harrill, told The Associated Press on Saturday.

He is survived by his wife, Libby Klinner, and three young children — 7-month-old twins and a 2-year-old son — according to the report.

"It's kind of heartbreaking to say: He was just a really good dad and really loved his family a lot — like a lot," Harrill said.

In a post on Instagram on Saturday, Libby Klinner said she was heartbroken for their children.

"They won't get to see firsthand the way he would jump up to help in any way he could," she wrote. "They won't see how goofy and funny he was. They won't witness his selflessness, the way he thought about everyone else before himself. They won't get to feel the deep love he had for them."

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., issued a statement expressing condolences to Savino's family after the airmen's names were released.

"I am deeply grateful for her courage and sacrifice in service to our country," Murray wrote. "Our servicemembers put their lives on the line to keep our country safe — remarkable women like Capt. Savino represent the absolute best of our state and country."

Pruitt had served in the Air

Force since 2017 and deployed four times, according to WLKY News in Louisville, Ky.

"Praying for the family and friends of TSgt. Ashley Pruitt of Bardstown," Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., said in a statement Saturday. "God bless her memory and her ultimate sacrifice in Operation Epic [Fury] to rid the world of the largest state sponsor of terror. Her legacy will never be forgotten."

Pruitt is the second service member from Kentucky killed during the operation. Sgt. Benjamin N. Pennington, 26, of Glendale, died March 8 from injuries he suffered in a March 1 attack on Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.

In a statement posted to Facebook on Saturday, Koval's family said he "was truly the most amazing husband, father, son, brother, friend, and Airman. He loved what he did, and he was proud to put his uniform on and serve others. He grew up dreaming about becoming a pilot and to stand beside him as he made his dreams come true was an honor."

Angst, a KC-135 pilot, held a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Cincinnati, according to WBNS-



U.S. Air Force, Ohio National Guard and courtesy photos

Clockwise from top left: Tech. Sgt. Ashley B. Pruitt, 34, of Bardstown, Ky.; Capt. Ariana G. Savino, 31, of Covington, Wash.; Capt. Seth R. Koval, 38, of Mooresville, Ind.; Capt. Curtis J. Angst, 30, of Wilmington, Ohio; Maj. John A. Klinner, 33, of Auburn, Ala.; and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Tyler H. Simmons, 28, of Columbus, Ohio, were killed on Thursday when their KC-135 Stratotanker crashed in western Iraq while supporting Operation Epic Fury.

TV in Columbus, Ohio.

He enlisted in the Ohio Air National Guard in 2015 as a vehicle maintenance technician before earning his commission in 2021 and qualifying as a refueling pilot in 2024, the CBS affiliate reported Saturday.

The family of Simmons — the youngest of the six airmen — said

in a statement that "Tyler's smile could light up any room."

"His strong presence would fill it," they wrote Saturday. "His parents, grandparents, family and friends are grief stricken for the loss of life."

The deaths bring to 13 the number of U.S. service members killed in Operation Epic Fury.

More than 2,000 Marines, USS Tripoli ordered to Mideast, reports say

Staff and wire reports

More than 2,000 Marines and at least one warship are headed from the Pacific to the Middle East, multiple news outlets reported Friday.

One U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that roughly 2,500 Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli have been ordered to deploy.

ABC News reported that the deployment will include three amphibious ships. Tripoli has recently been operating with Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group, including amphibious transport docks USS New Orleans and USS San Diego, in the Philippine Sea. Tripoli was participating in the three-week Iron Fist exercise in Japan as recently as March 9.

The Wall Street Journal, which was first to report the news, cited three officials who said



COLTEN BRADLEY/U.S. Navy

Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Logan Bonaguidi, right, grades a target during a live-fire exercise aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli on Thursday.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth approved a U.S. Central Command request for an element of an amphibious ready group and attached

Marine expeditionary unit.

The Pentagon did not respond to a request for comment.

Tripoli would join the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford, as well as the USS Abraham Lincoln as part of an armada of American warships, stealth fighters and air defense systems in the region. About 50,000 troops have been deployed.

It is unclear what assets are being brought on Tripoli. The 855-foot America-class amphibious assault ship in 2022 set a record when it loaded 16 F-35 fighter jets. The ship can also carry MV-22 Osprey tiltrotors and a variety of helicopters such as the MH-60S Seahawk.

The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit is based on Okinawa. Marine expeditionary units integrate air and ground combat elements into a single force, making it suited for amphibious operations. Aside from the standard tasks such units are trained for, like hu-

manitarian assistance and port seizure operations, the 31st MEU is also trained for limited scale raids and the seizure of maritime platforms, according to its website.

The deployment does not necessarily mean U.S. troops will conduct a ground operation in Iran.

The deployment comes as fighting disrupts trade through the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global oil exports. CENTCOM on Thursday said it had struck over 90 ships, including 30 minelayers.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright told CNBC on Thursday the U.S. Navy is not ready to escort oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz. His comments come after a post on his social media account wrongly claimed the Navy had escorted a tanker through the strait.

Contributing: Stars and Stripes reporters Seth Robson, Matthew Adams and Alison Bath; The Associated Press.

Base in Turkey hears air raid sirens as NATO shoots down 3rd missile

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Air raid sirens sounded early Friday at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, where NATO dispatched a Patriot missile defense team earlier in the week to beef up security, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

The base, which sits near the eastern edge of the Mediterranean

Sea, is home to U.S. forces and also is also well-known as a storage site for American nuclear bombs.

Turkey's defense ministry on Wednesday confirmed that an Iranian missile was shot down on the same day in the country. Numerous postings from residents in the nearby city of Adana showed a bright object flying overhead in the night sky.

NATO air defenses in the past week have twice intercepted incoming missiles from Iran.

The situation prompted NATO to increase its missile defense force posture. On Tuesday, the Turkish defense ministry announced that an American-made Patriot system had been deployed to Turkey's Malatya region.

That part of Turkey hosts a crit-

ical NATO radar, which is manned by U.S. troops and is part of the alliance's integrated air defense system.

NATO didn't specify which unit was deployed to carry out the mission, but several allied countries possess the Patriot system.

In Baumholder, Germany, the U.S. Army has a Patriot unit that over the years has mobilized on

short notice for urgent missions. Shortly after Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the unit was sent to Poland to protect NATO airspace.

More than a decade ago, U.S. patriot batteries also were sent to southern Turkey to protect Turkish air space during hostilities along the country's border with Syria.

MIDEAST

Gulf states intercept new missiles, drones

BY SAM METZ, SAMY MAGDY
AND JULIA FRANKEL

Associated Press

CAIRO — Gulf Arab states reported new missile and drone attacks on Sunday after Iran threatened to widen its campaign and called for the evacuation of three major ports in the United Arab Emirates as the war in the Middle East, now in its third week, expands further.

Israel and the United States attacked Iran on Feb. 28, saying they were striking nuclear and military sites and encouraging the Iranian people to rise against their leaders. Iran has responded with attacks against Israel and neighboring countries in the Persian Gulf.

The war has upended global air travel, disrupted oil exports from the region and sent fuel prices rising.

Israel said it continued to strike Iran on Sunday as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE told residents they were working to intercept incoming projectiles, a day after Iran threatened three Emirati ports, the first time it has done so against a neighboring country's non-U.S. assets.

Iran had earlier accused the U.S. of launching Friday's strikes on Kharg Island from the UAE, without providing evidence for the claim.

The UAE and other Gulf countries that host U.S. bases have denied allowing their land or airspace to be used for military operations against Iran, including toward the island, home to Iran's primary oil terminal.

Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, said the U.S. attacked Kharg and Abu Musa islands from locations in the UAE.

He called the escalation dangerous and said Iran "will try to be careful not to attack any populated area" there.

U.S. Central Command said it had no response to Iran's claim.

Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, rejected Iran's claim that the U.S. used Emirati land or air space for its

attacks on Kharg Island.

Iran has fired hundreds of missiles and drones at the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman during the war. It says it targets U.S. assets, even as Iranian strikes are reported at civilian sites such as airports and oil fields.

Though their air defenses have intercepted most, the war has caused significant damage and rattled economies in the Gulf countries.

Araghchi also told the London-based Al-Araby al-Jadeed on Sunday that Iran is ready to consider any proposal that includes "a complete end" to the war and said mediation efforts were ongoing between Iran and its neighbors to de-escalate.

He gave no indication on whether progress has been made.

Since the war started, Iranian strikes have killed at least a dozen civilians in Gulf countries, most of them migrant workers.

In Iran, the International Committee for the Red Cross said more than 1,300 people have been killed so far.

Iran's Health Ministry says 223 women and 202 children are among those killed, according to Mizan, the judiciary's official news agency.

In Israel, 12 people have been killed by Iranian missile fire and more have been injured, including three on Sunday.

At least 13 members of the U.S. military have also been killed since the war began; six of them died in a plane crash in Iraq last week.

Meanwhile, at least 820 people have been killed in Lebanon, according to its Health Ministry, and 850,000 have been displaced since Iran-backed Hezbollah started hitting Israel and Israel responded with strikes and sent additional troops into southern Lebanon.

Iran fired barrages of missiles toward Israel on Sunday, sending residents rushing to shelters as sirens sounded and several strikes hit central Israel and the Tel Aviv area.



ALI JABAR/AP

Smoke rises from the U.S. Embassy building in Baghdad on Saturday. A missile struck a helipad inside the compound. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

US strikes strategic island as Iran war enters 3rd week

Stars and Stripes

U.S. forces struck more than 90 targets on Iran's Kharg Island on Friday, U.S. Central Command said in a post on X on Saturday.

The small coral island about 21 miles off Iran's coast is the primary terminal through which nearly all of Iran's oil exports pass.

The post, which included a video montage, noted that strikes hit military targets, like "naval mine storage facilities, missile storage bunkers," while also "preserving the oil infrastructure."

A Friday post by President Donald Trump on Truth Social similarly said "for reasons of decency, I have chosen NOT to wipe out the Oil Infrastructure on the Island," but that the decision would be reconsidered if transit through the Strait of Hormuz continues to be threatened.

That was followed by a Saturday morning post in which the president said "many countries" would be sending warships in conjunction with the U.S. "to keep the Strait open and safe."

His post did not offer further details. The president also said "Hopefully China, France, Japan, South Korea, the UK, and others" affected by the strait's effective closure would send ships.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright told NBC he has been "in dialogue" with some of the countries, and said he expected China "will be a constructive partner" in reopening the strait through which one-fifth of global oil exports normally pass. But as of Sunday there had been no commitments from the countries.

Meanwhile, Iran urged people Saturday to evacuate the Middle East's busiest port and two others in the United Arab Emirates, openly threatening a neighboring country's non-U.S. assets for the first time as its war with the U.S. and Israel entered a third week.

Tehran said the U.S. had used "ports, docks and hideouts" in the UAE to launch strikes on Kharg Island, home to the main terminal handling Iran's oil exports, without providing evidence. It urged people to leave areas where it said U.S. forces were sheltering. CENTCOM gave no response to the claim that the U.S. had launched strikes from the UAE.

Hours later, there was no sign of an attack on Dubai's Jebel Ali port — the Mideast's busiest — or the Khalifa port in Abu Dhabi. But debris from an intercepted Iranian drone hitting an oil facility sparked a fire at the third port, in Fujairah.

A missile struck a helipad inside the U.S.

Embassy compound in Baghdad on Saturday. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. The embassy complex, one of the largest U.S. diplomatic facilities in the world, has been repeatedly targeted by rockets and drones fired by Iran-aligned militias. Switzerland closed its airspace for U.S. military flights directly linked to the Iran war, citing its tradition of neutrality in armed conflicts.

Two requests for U.S. reconnaissance planes to cross over Switzerland on Sunday were rejected, the federal government in Bern said in a statement Saturday. Three other flights, including two transport aircraft, were approved.

Further U.S. overflights that rise above normal numbers will be denied unless their purpose is clear and not connected to the war, it said.

On Friday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Iran's supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, is "wounded and likely disfigured" during a Pentagon briefing.

Khamenei vowed in a written statement Thursday to keep attacking neighboring countries, and called on Gulf nations to "shut down" U.S. bases in the region and said that protection promised by the U.S. was "nothing more than a lie." Khamenei has not been seen in public since taking over as Iran's leader, and his statement was read by a state TV anchor.

Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during the briefing that the U.S. military has struck more than 6,000 targets and "strike packages continue to launch every hour."

Hegseth said as of Wednesday, Iran's entire ballistic missile production capacity has been "functionally destroyed."

Hegseth, when asked about news reports about likely U.S. responsibility for a deadly Tomahawk missile strike on an Iranian elementary school, said CENTCOM has designated an investigative officer to complete the review. A command investigation will take as long as necessary to address all the matters surrounding the incident.

"But I will note to this group, and to the world, there's only one entity in this conflict between U.S. and Iran that never targets civilians. Literally never target civilians," Hegseth added. "We will investigate, we'll get to the truth, and we'll share it when we have it."



VAHID SALEM/AP

Volunteers clean debris from a residential building damaged when a nearby police station was hit Friday in a U.S.-Israeli strike in Tehran, Iran, on Sunday.

Stars and Stripes reporter Matthew Adams, Bloomberg News and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

NATION

US faces elevated terrorism threats

BY ERIC TUCKER
AND ALANNA DURKIN
RICHER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In New York City, two men who federal authorities say were inspired by Islamic State brought powerful homemade bombs to a far-right protest outside the mayoral mansion.

In Michigan, a naturalized citizen from Lebanon rammed his vehicle into a synagogue, where he was shot at by security before he shot himself to death.

In Virginia, a man previously imprisoned on a terrorism conviction was heard yelling “Allahu akbar” before opening fire in a university classroom in an attack that officials said ended when the shooter was killed by students.

The three acts of violence in the last week have laid bare a heightened terrorism threat unfolding against the backdrop of the U.S. war with Iran and as the country’s counterterrorism system is strained by the departures of experienced national security professionals at the FBI and Justice Department.

The firings and resignations, along with the diversion of resources and personnel over the last year to meet other Trump administration priorities, have fueled concerns about the capability to head off a potential surge in threats.

“So much experience has been decimated from the ranks,” said Frank Montoya, a retired senior FBI official. “The folks that were best positioned to get to the bottom of it before something really bad happened” are in many cases no longer with the government, he said, meaning less experienced personnel assigned to the threat are “starting from way behind.”

Iran has vowed revenge for the killing by the U.S. and Israel of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and though the fighting has

so far been confined to the Middle East, the Islamic Republic has long professed its determination to carry out violence on American soil.

The U.S. government after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks overhauled its intelligence and national security apparatus to prevent similarly catastrophic events.

But in the years since, lone actors radicalized online have nonetheless carried out shootings like the 2015 ambush attacks at a pair of military sites in Chattanooga, Tenn., and a rampage at an Orlando nightclub the following year by a gunman who killed 49 people and raged against “Western” values.

Those plots by self-directed individuals have proved notoriously difficult to prevent and have occurred even when the FBI has not been roiled by firings and internal upheaval like during the first year of the Trump administration.

Terrorism concerns typically rise during times of international conflict when military action overseas is accompanied by increased vigilance, said Claire Moravec, a former FBI national security official.

The Justice Department’s National Security Division was established in 2006 to address threats of terrorism, espionage and other concerns.

In the last year, lawyers in the division found themselves assigned to review the Jeffrey Epstein files to prepare them for release, and elite sections dedicated to prosecuting terrorists and catching spies have endured turnover.

About half of the division’s counterterrorism prosecutors have left since the beginning of the Trump administration, along with about a third of its senior leadership, according to estimates from Justice Connection, a network of department alumni.



MAUI COUNTY/AP

Days of downpours in Maui County have resulted in flooding in Hana, Hawaii, and other areas of the state.

Storm brings heavy snow, high winds across much of US

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A broad and erratic patchwork of severe weather rumbled across much of the U.S. on Sunday, dumping heavy snow and making roads impassable in the Upper Midwest while damaging high winds swept across the Plains. Even Hawaii was affected, with parts hit by severe flooding.

Portions of the mid-South readied for late-day thunderstorms that forecasters say would spread eastward and by Monday threaten a large swath of the Eastern U.S., with mid-Atlantic states — including Washington, D.C. — most at risk for high winds and tornadoes.

Successive punches of snow, wind and severe weather are “going to impact the eastern half of the United States,” AccuWeather senior meteorologist Tyler Roys said in an interview. Beyond the threat to lives and property, “whether it’s wind gusts from a squall line, blizzard or snow, or just wind because of the storm, you’re looking at several major airports being impacted.”

More than a foot of snow fell in some portions of Minnesota and Wisconsin as of Sunday morning, according to National Weather Service reports, with another several inches likely to fall in the Minneapolis area amid blizzard warnings by the weather service.

Warnings of hazardous road conditions were issued across Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, where transportation officials warned of worsening conditions Sunday with low visibility and snow-covered roadways.

“Roads are becoming impassable in many of Wisconsin’s northern counties,” the Wisconsin Department of Transportation said on social media. “Please stay off the roads to keep yourself and others safe.”

The weather conditions created headaches for air travel too with hundreds of cancellations.

More than 600 flights flying out of and into the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport were canceled Sunday, according to FlightAware, a website that tracks

flight disruptions. Dozens more through Detroit were also scrapped.

Areas of central Wisconsin and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula are likely to see over 2 feet of snow, with higher isolated totals, Roys said. Lower snow accumulations in places like Chicago and Milwaukee late Sunday and Monday will still likely create troubles for commuters, he added.

While few to no power outages related to the weekend storm had been reported as of Sunday, roughly 150,000 utility customers in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan — where Friday’s gusts reaching 85 mph — remained without electricity early Sunday, according to PowerOutage.us, which tracks outages nationwide.

About 30 Nebraska National Guard have been deployed to help combat multiple wildfires across a broad swath of range and grassland, the state’s Emergency Management Agency said.

One fire-related fatality was reported on Friday.

US-China talks open in Paris, paving way for Trump-Xi summit

Associated Press

BEIJING — Representatives from Beijing and Washington began their economic and trade talks in Paris on Sunday, paving the way for President Donald Trump’s state visit to Beijing to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping in about two weeks.

The delegations, led by U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, convened in the French capital in the morning, China’s official news agency Xinhua reported. The White House has said that

Trump will travel to China from March 31 to April 2, though Beijing has not officially confirmed it.

Bessent said on Thursday that his team will continue to deliver results that put America’s farmers, workers and businesses first. The U.S. Treasury Department said Bessent will meet He on Sunday and Monday.

China’s commerce ministry said Friday the two sides are set to discuss “trade and economic issues of mutual concern.”

Trump’s visit to China will be the first for a U.S. president since

he went in his first term in 2017. It will come five months after the two leaders met in the South Korean city of Busan and agreed to a one-year truce in a trade war that temporarily saw tit-for-tat tariffs soar to triple digits before the two sides climbed down.

Still, trade remains a source of tensions. The commerce ministry on Friday hit back against the Trump administration’s new trade investigation into 16 trading partners, including China. The investigation — which came after a Supreme Court ruling struck

down Trump’s sweeping global tariffs imposed last year — could pave the way for new tariffs.

Another issue that could be discussed is the Iran war, especially when global anxiety is soaring over oil prices and supplies. Trump said Saturday that he hopes China, France, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom and others will send warships to keep the Strait of Hormuz “open and safe.”

Before Sunday’s talks, Gary Ng, a senior economist at French bank Natixis and a research fellow at

the Central European Institute of Asian Studies, said the Paris meeting is likely the most important bilateral one before the Xi-Trump summit.

The key issue is “whether China and the U.S. can agree on what is agreed and manage disagreement. Iran is a new factor, but Beijing is more concerned about the flip-flopping of U.S. policies,” he said.

Last week, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said it would be a “big year” for China-U.S. relations.

NATION

Judge quashes Federal Reserve subpoenas

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge on Friday quashed Justice Department subpoenas issued to the Federal Reserve in January, a severe blow to an investigation that has already attracted strong criticism on Capitol Hill.

The investigation into testimony last June by Chair Jerome Powell about a \$2.5 billion building renovation has also delayed Senate consideration of Kevin Warsh, President Donald Trump's pick to replace Powell when his term ends May 15.

Judge James Boasberg said that the government has “produced essentially zero evidence to suspect Chair Powell of a crime” and called its justifications for the subpoenas so “thin and unsubstantiated” that they were simply a pretext to force Powell to cut interest rates, as Trump has demanded.

“There is abundant evidence that the subpoenas’ dominant (if not sole) purpose is to harass and pressure Powell either to yield to the President or to resign and make way for a Fed Chair who will,” he wrote.

The unprecedented investigation into Powell and the Fed is the latest in a series of moves by the Trump administration to pressure the central bank, which has for decades been considered as independent from day-to-day politics. Trump has also sought to fire Lisa Cook, a member of the Fed's governing board, after a member of his administration accused her of mortgage fraud, though no charges were ever filed. The Supreme Court has blocked Cook's firing for now.

Boasberg's ruling blocks U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro, who issued the subpoenas, from obtaining records from the Fed related

to the building renovation. Pirro blasted the ruling at a news conference and said she would appeal it.

Pirro said an “activist judge” has quashed the subpoenas, and has “neutered the grand jury's ability to investigate crime” and leaves Powell “bathed in immunity.”

The Justice Department's investigation centers on testimony last June by Powell before the Senate Banking Committee, when he was asked about cost overruns on the Fed's extensive building renovations. The most recent estimates from the Fed suggest the current estimated cost of \$2.5 billion is about \$600 million higher than a 2022 estimate of \$1.9 billion.

Powell at the time disputed that the renovation included “rooftop gardens ... VIP elevators” and other amenities. But administration officials charged that earlier construction plans included some of

those features, suggesting Powell was either lying or hadn't filed updated building plans.

Pirro, in her news conference, said she wanted to investigate “an atrocious cost overrun of \$1 billion.” In a filing unsealed Friday, the government said it was investigating “possible fraud and false statements” by Powell.

Pirro's plan to appeal and continue the investigation could further delay consideration of Warsh's nomination. Powell can remain as chair past May 15 if no replacement has been approved.

Powell revealed the investigation in an unprecedented video Jan. 11, which prompted Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican and member of the banking committee, to block consideration of Warsh until the investigation is dropped.

Tillis said the ruling confirmed “just how weak and frivolous the

criminal investigation of Chairman Powell is.” Tillis has vowed to blockade all Federal Reserve nominees until the criminal probe into Powell is dropped.

Tillis has also said that seven Republican members of the banking committee have said no crime was committed by Powell at the June hearing.

On Tuesday, Tillis met with Warsh and said he “possesses impeccable credentials and a clear vision for maintaining the Fed's independence while achieving its dual mandate,” which is to seek low inflation and maximum employment. But he reiterated he couldn't support Warsh until the investigation is completed.

With Republicans holding only a 13-11 majority on the committee, Tillis can block Warsh's nomination from being forwarded to the Senate if all Democrats vote against it.

Synagogue had been bolstering security

By **ED WHITE**
AND **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**
Associated Press

The Michigan synagogue that came under attack last week when an armed man drove his car into the building had for months been strengthening its security apparatus by hiring a seasoned police lieutenant as its security director and holding active shooter training.

That beefed up security, which came in response to rising anti-semitism and other attacks at places of worship, is being credited with saving lives in an event that ended with only the attacker dying.

An armed private security guard shot back at the attacker after he opened fire through his windshield in a hallway inside the building. When the car barreled in, there were 140 students inside in an early childhood learning center. All were unscathed.

The car's engine caught fire, and the gunman, Ayman Mohammad Ghazali, a Lebanese-born U.S. citizen, eventually used his own weapon to fatally shoot himself, according to Jennifer Runyan, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Detroit field office.

“If they had not done their job almost perfectly we would be talking about an immense tragedy here today with children gone,” U.S. Sen. Elissa Slotkin said of the building's security.



PAUL SANCYA/AP

A police vehicle sits outside the Temple Israel synagogue, Friday in West Bloomfield Township, Mich.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer added: “These heroes threw themselves in harm's way, engaging a suspect.”

One of Temple Israel's rabbis said “it was only a miracle” that none of its members were hurt.

“Unfortunately the entire Jewish community, no matter where we are in the world, we have to plan for things like this,” Temple Israel Rabbi Jennifer Kaluzny told CNN.

The effort to bolster security at Temple Israel, outside Detroit, came as many houses of worship have undergone similar efforts, with leaders working to fortify facilities in the wake of deadly attacks.

Synagogues around the world have increased protections after the U.S. and Israel launched a war with Iran.

The synagogue last June hired a former police lieutenant, Danny Phillips, to lead its in-house armed

security guards as the head of security, with the temple saying it was taking a proactive step “in response to the evolving realities facing Jewish communities.”

Phillips served in law enforcement for almost three decades, including more than 20 years as his department's advanced firearm instructor, according to the website of a college where he teaches a police academy course on responding to active assailants.

And in January, Temple Israel's staff and clergy participated in an active shooter prevention and preparedness training led by an FBI official, according to the synagogue's social media accounts.

Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said on Thursday that he had contacted the head of security for the temple just two days before the attack. He credited the thorough preparation ahead of the attack as the reason that there weren't casualties.

Trump seeks to close \$1.6T revenue gap with raft of new tariffs

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration this week stepped up its ambitious effort to replace about \$1.6 trillion in lost tariff revenue that was eliminated by the Supreme Court's decision to strike down a range of the president's import taxes.

Recovering that lost revenue, which the White House was counting on to help offset the steep, multi-trillion dollar cost of its tax cuts, is possible but will be challenging, experts say. The administration has to use different legal provisions to impose new duties, and those provisions require longer, complex processes that U.S. companies can use to seek exemptions. It could be months or more before it is clear how much revenue the tariffs will yield.

“I wouldn't bet against this administration being able to get back on paper the same effective tariff rate they had before,” said Elena Patel, co-director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. But the new approach will “make it easier for people to contest the tariffs, which is going to put a big asterisk on the revenue until all that is settled.”

On Wednesday, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the administration will investigate 16 economies — including the European Union — over whether their governments are subsidizing excessive factory capacity in a way that disadvantages

U.S. manufacturing.

In addition, he said there would be a second investigation of dozens of countries to see if their failure to ban goods made by forced labor amounts to an unfair trade practice that harms the United States. That investigation will also cover the EU and China, as well as Mexico, Canada, Australia, and Brazil.

Both investigations are being conducted under Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act, which requires the administration to consult with the targeted countries, as well as hold public hearings and allow affected U.S. industries to comment. A hearing as part of the factory capacity investigation will be held May 5, while a hearing on the forced labor investigation will occur April 28.

It's a far cry from the emergency law that President Donald Trump relied on in his first year in office, which allowed him to immediately impose tariffs on any country, at nearly any level, simply by issuing an executive order.

Moments after the Supreme Court's ruling, Trump imposed a 10% tariff on all imports under a separate legal authority, but that duty can only last for 150 days. The president has said he would raise it to 15%, the maximum allowed, but has yet to do so. Some two dozen states have already challenged the new tariffs. The administration is aiming to complete its Section 301 investigations before the 10% duties expire.

NATION

Immigration data becoming harder to find

By REBECCA SANTANA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration likes to promote its immigration enforcement agenda through numbers, with ambitious goals to deport 1 million people, report zero releases at the U.S.-Mexico border and arrest thousands of alleged gang members.

For all the boasting, the administration has been releasing less reliable, carefully vetted data than its predecessors on a signature policy that has become one of the most contentious of Trump's second term.

The gap in information and a loss of figures from an office that has tracked immigration data back to the 1800s have left researchers, advocates, lawyers and journalists without important statistics to hold the Republican administration to account.

"They aren't publishing the data," said Mike Howell, who heads the conservative Oversight Project, an advocacy group pushing for more deportations. Instead, Howell said, the Department of Homeland Security has put out numbers in news releases "that purport to be statistics with no statistical backup and the numbers have jumped all over the place."

With mass deportations a priority, new restrictions and increased enforcement have led to a surge in immigration arrests, detentions



JENNY KANE/AP

Law enforcement officers walk out of a Portland, Ore., U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in October.

and deportations.

But finding the metrics that once measured those changes can be hard. It is an extension of administration moves to limit the flow of government information by scrubbing or removing federal datasets or by the firing of the top official overseeing jobs data.

The Office of Homeland Security Statistics is responsible for

publishing figures from Homeland Security agencies, including removals and the nationalities of those deported, to provide a comprehensive picture of immigration trends at the border and inside the United States.

Originally known as the Office of Immigration Statistics, it tracked such data since 1872. In its current form, created under the

Biden administration, it also started publishing monthly reports that allowed researchers to track developments almost in real time.

But key enforcement metrics on its website have not been updated since early last year. A note on the page where the monthly reports were says it "is delayed while it is under review."

"It's the most timely data. It's

the most reliable data," Austin Kocher, research professor at Syracuse University who closely follows immigration data trends, said about the monthly reports. "It has the most omniscient view of immigration enforcement across the entire agency."

An interactive dashboard launched by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in December 2023 once let users examine whom the agency was arresting, their nationalities, criminal histories and removal numbers. ICE called it a "new era in transparency."

Though intended for quarterly updates, the latest data is from January 2025. The agency's annual report, typically released in December, had not been published as of mid-March.

The now-missing data had helped researchers study the effects of different policies. Lawyers could cite the figures to support their litigation. Journalists saw in them a powerful tool to hold the government to account on public claims or to report on important trends.

"We're all a little bit in the dark about exactly how immigration enforcement is operating at a time when it's taking new and unprecedented forms," said Julia Gelatt, associate director of the U.S. Immigration Policy Program at the Migration Policy Institute.

Charges dropped against teens in death of teacher from prank

By CHARLOTTE KRAMON
Associated Press

ATLANTA — A Georgia prosecutor has decided to drop charges against a teenager who police say was driving the truck that struck and killed a beloved high school teacher when a prank turned deadly, the teen's lawyer said. The victim's family had urged authorities not to compound the tragedy by prosecuting the teen driver and his friends.

The 40-year-old teacher, Jason Hughes, died after slipping and falling into the street as the teens started to drive away after participating in a community tradition of pranking teachers by throwing toilet paper onto his front lawn.

The students had stopped and rendered aid to Hughes until emergency responders arrived. Hughes was brought to the hospital and died on March 6, the Hall County Sheriff's Office said.

Jayden Ryan Wallace — the 18-year-old driver, whom his lawyer said adored Hughes and considered him a mentor — was arrested on a felony charge of vehicular homicide, and four other teens

were charged with misdemeanors.

Graham McKinnon, a lawyer who represents Wallace, said Friday that the charges against his client had been dropped. McKinnon said that prosecutors also dropped misdemeanor charges against the four other teens who were there.

The students had gone to Hughes' home around 11:40 p.m. on March 6 and began wrapping his trees with toilet paper, the sheriff's office said.

The teens started to leave when Hughes came outside — his family said he had heard in advance about the prank and hoped to surprise them.

McKinnon said Wallace and his friends were playing a "competitive game" that has long been a tradition at North Hall High School.

"In the end, there was no crime — only an extremely sad and devastating accident," McKinnon said in a statement.

Vehicular homicide charges, he said, didn't make sense because Wallace didn't use his car unsafe-

ly or improperly.

"Jayden is still grieving deeply, but he's determined eventually to carry on and live his life in a way that would make Coach Hughes proud."

Hughes — who taught math and helped coach golf, football and baseball at North Hall High School in Gainesville — was a "mentor" to Wallace, McKinnon said.

"I pledge to live out the remainder of my life in a manner that honors the memory of Coach Hughes by exemplifying Christ. He will never be forgotten," Wallace said in a statement released by his family on Wednesday.

Hughes' family had issued a statement last week saying he knew and loved the five students involved and urging authorities to drop all charges against them.

"This is a terrible tragedy, and our family is determined to prevent a separate tragedy from occurring, ruining the lives of these students," Hughes' family said.

"This would be counter to Jason's lifelong dedication of investing in the lives of these children."

No vote yet for Dem on Kennedy Center board

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
AND DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge ruled on Saturday that a Democratic lawmaker is entitled to participate in a Kennedy Center board meeting to discuss President Donald Trump's plan to close the performing arts center for two years of renovations.

But the judge is not forcing the board to let Ohio Rep. Joyce Beatty, an ex officio member through her position in Congress, vote at Monday's session.

She sued to preclude the Trump administration from excluding her from the meeting where board members are expected to decide whether to approve the Republican president's proposal to shutter the center during the construction project.

U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper concluded that the board must give Beatty documents about the closure and renovation plans because withholding that information before the vote would prevent her from doing her job as a trustee. She must also be allowed to speak at

the meeting, he said.

"The Court finds, however, that Beatty has not carried her burden as to her right to vote, at least at this very early stage," Cooper said. The judge said allowing her to participate and engage in deliberations means "the marginal harm to her from not voting is much less, as she will be able to lodge her objections on the record and have the opportunity to persuade her colleagues of her position."

Kennedy Center spokeswoman Roma Daravi said the center "will abide by the court's ruling and is happy to provide information demonstrating the need for closure and renovations."

There was no immediate response from Beatty to requests for comment on the ruling.

After Cooper heard arguments Thursday, Beatty told reporters she went to court to stand up for the rule of law and democracy.

Justice Department lawyer William Jankowski said the information — possibly a work in progress — should be provided to Beatty and other meeting participants by Monday.

WORLD

Russian strike on Kyiv kills 4 and wounds 15 as talks stalled

By SUSIE BLANN
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A combined Russian missile and drone attack on the Kyiv region killed at least four people and wounded 15, a Ukrainian official said Saturday, after the United States postponed Russia-Ukraine talks due to the war with Iran.

The attack hit four districts, damaging residential buildings, educational institutions, enterprises and critical infrastructure, the head of the regional administration, Mykola Kalashnyk, wrote in a social media post. He said three

of the wounded were in critical condition.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the main target of the strikes was the energy infrastructure of the Kyiv region. He said Russia launched around 430 drones and 68 missiles.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Saturday said the nighttime strikes targeted energy and industrial facilities serving Ukraine's armed forces, as well as military airfields.

The U.S. has postponed its sponsored talks planned this week between the two sides due to the war

in the Middle East.

As U.S. and Israeli missiles and bombs rain on Iran, Russia has responded with words of indignation but no action to support its ally. Moscow's failure to help another ally, after the 2024 ouster of former Syrian ruler Bashar Assad and January's U.S. arrest of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, highlighted the limits of its influence.

Still, the Kremlin expects to reap benefits from the Iran war.

Russia is already profiting from a surge in global energy prices, and could hope that the Mideast



EFREM LUKATSKY/AP

Firefighters put out the fire at a neighbourhood following a Russia missile and drone attack, in Brovary, near Kyiv, Ukraine, on Saturday.

war will detract attention from Ukraine, deplete Western arsenals and force NATO allies to reduce military support for Kyiv.

Zelenskyy on Saturday called on Kyiv's Western partners to pay "one hundred percent attention"

to the need to boost the production of air defense missiles.

"Russia will try to exploit the war in the Middle East to cause even greater destruction here in Europe, in Ukraine," he said in a post on social media.

Hospital officials: Israeli strike killed 4 in Gaza, including 2 kids, pregnant woman

Associated Press

CAIRO — At least four Palestinians, including two boys and a woman pregnant with twins, were killed Sunday by an Israeli airstrike in the war-torn Gaza Strip, hospital authorities said.

The strike hit a house in Nuseirat, an urban refugee camp in central Gaza, killing a couple in their 30s and their 10-year son, according to the nearby Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

The fourth fatality, a 15-year-old neighbor, was taken to the Awda hospital in Nuseirat. The boy's young brother was wounded in the strike, the hospital

said. "We were sleeping and got up to the strike of a missile. The strike was strong," said Mahmoud al-Muhtaseb, a neighbor. "There was no prior warning."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The deaths were the latest fatalities among Palestinians in the coastal enclave since an October ceasefire deal attempted to halt a more than 2-year war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

While the heaviest fighting has subsided, the ceasefire has still seen almost daily Israeli fire. Israeli forces have carried out re-

peated airstrikes and frequently fire on Palestinians near military-held zones, killing more than 650 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials.

Israel says it has responded to violations of the ceasefire or targeted wanted militants.

But about half of those killed have been women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Militants have carried out shooting attacks on troops, and Israel says its strikes are in response to that and other violations. Four Israeli soldiers have been killed since the ceasefire.

US flag raised at embassy in Venezuela after 7 years

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — The American flag was raised Saturday over the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela for the first time since 2019, a move that highlighted the recent shift in relations between the two countries since then President Nicolás Maduro was captured by American troops in January.

Though the flag is now waving, the building is undergoing renovations and it remains unclear when it will fully reopen.

The move comes after several statements from President Donald Trump in support of Maduro's successor, acting President

Delcy Rodríguez, who has tried to keep negotiations open with the American government.

The flag was raised "exactly seven years after it was taken down," the U.S. Embassy team said in a statement.

The American flag being raised drew immediate attention from local residents.

"It's a good thing, really, what a joy," said Caracas resident Luz Verónica López. "Other countries must come back too because that's what we need; progress, to move forward with good relations with the rest of the world, as it should be."

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market




Transportation

944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

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



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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge rejects challenge to new US House districts

MO JEFFERSON CITY — A Missouri court has rejected a legal challenge to new U.S. House districts backed by President Donald Trump that are aimed at helping Republicans win an additional seat in the mid-term elections.

Opponents of the new districts claimed they violated a state constitutional provision requiring districts to be compact. But Jackson County Circuit Judge Adam Caine rejected that in a ruling Thursday.

Although the decision marked a victory for Republicans, a separate legal challenge remains pending at the Missouri Supreme Court alleging that mid-decade redistricting is unconstitutional. Opponents also have submitted over 300,000 petition signatures in an attempt to force a statewide vote on the new congressional map.

Missouri is one of several states targeted for congressional redistricting by Trump, who has been angling for an edge in the November elections as Republicans try to hold their narrow House majority. After Trump called on Texas Republicans to redistrict, Democrats countered with new districts in California, and a redistricting battle soon spread to other states.

Lawmakers approve money to buy waterfall

OR SCOTT MILLS — The state of Oregon may soon have some new public property: A spectacular waterfall, beloved by generations, that was recently put up for sale on Redfin.

Abiqua Falls — known for its 92-foot vertical drop over a columnar basalt cliff — has been privately owned for over a century but open to the public. Its owner, a nonprofit that supports a community of Benedictine monks, put it on the market earlier this year.

The listing worried fans of the natural wonder. But at the tail end of the legislative session this month, a bipartisan group of lawmakers stepped in and approved \$2.1 million to buy the falls and its surrounding land.

"It's not every day where you see a waterfall come up for sale on Redfin or Realtor.com with no price," said Travis Williams, president of the Willamette River Preservation Trust, a conservation nonprofit. "The public was really confused and fearful that the site would be closed off."

The waterfall is about 30 miles east of the state capital, Salem. It's reached by a rough, unpaved road and short, steep hike — so steep that previous visitors have left ropes in some spots for assistance.

Clyburn will run for 18th term in Congress

SC COLUMBIA — U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, the dean of South Carolina's Democrats, said Thursday that he will



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Monitoring the migration

Amish birders focus their binoculars on thousands of migrating snow geese preparing to take off from Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area in Kleinfeltersville, Pa. The mesmerizing display, about an hour after sunrise, was over almost as soon as it began. The birds circled a few times and then headed out, seeking unharvested grains on their epic annual spring flight northward into New York state and Quebec.

run for an 18th House term, a move that could position him as an influential elder statesman in Congress if his party regains the majority in November.

The decision by the 85-year-old cuts against calls for generational change within the party. Clyburn is one of several veteran Democrats running again instead of stepping aside for younger politicians whose frustration increased in the wake of President Joe Biden's failed reelection campaign.

Clyburn is among the oldest Democrats serving in Washington, and the only member of the last Democratic leadership team who is looking to stick around. Former Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California and former Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland both plan to retire at the end of their current terms.

NASA clears moon rocket for launch in April

FL CAPE CANAVERAL — NASA cleared its moon rocket on Thursday for an April launch with four astronauts after completing the latest round of repairs.

The 322-foot rocket will roll out of the hangar and back to the pad this week at Kennedy Space Center, leading to a launch attempt as early as April 1. It will mark humanity's first trip to the moon in more than 50 years.

The Artemis II crew should

have blasted off on a lunar fly-around earlier this year, but fuel leaks and other problems with the Space Launch System rocket interfered. Although NASA managed to plug the hydrogen fuel issue forced the space agency to return the rocket to the Vehicle Assembly Building for repairs, bumping the mission to April.

The space agency has only six days at the beginning of April to launch before standing down until April 30 into early May.

Foxy stowaway travels from England to US

NY NEW YORK — A red fox somehow slipped onto a cargo ship that traveled from Southampton, England, to New York, where the animal is now in the Bronx Zoo's care.

The zoo said that the 11-pound male fox appears healthy after early examinations.

"He seems to be settling in well," said Keith Lovett, the zoo's director of animal programs. "It's gone through a lot."

It's not clear how the animal got on the ship full of automobiles, which left Southampton on Feb. 4, according to the zoo. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the ship's crew discovered the furry passenger while traveling to the Port of New York and New Jersey, where the vessel arrived Feb. 18. Officials brought the fox to the zoo

the next day. He's estimated to be 2 years old.

State halts permitting for weekend rallies at Capitol

MT HELENA — Organizers of the upcoming "No Kings" rally in Helena say that a new state rule banning permits for weekend rallies on the Capitol grounds violates their First Amendment rights. State officials countered that the new rule, quietly instituted just last month, was intended to save money.

The update to permitting guidelines on the Montana.gov site, which has not been previously reported, states that public events requiring a permit "may only occur on weekdays and between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., excluding holidays."

The revisions apply to all state-owned or leased spaces or grounds at the Capitol Complex. The policy requires a permit for any public event that uses "state resources, requires setup of any structures, materials, displays, or requires clean-up." A public event is defined as "any event that is open to the public and to which the public will have full access."

The Capitol Complex has long been a preferred location for protests, government press conferences, ceremonies and other public gatherings, including "No Kings" rallies that have drawn

thousands of protesters to Helena, most recently on a Saturday last October. The next nationwide "No Kings" rally is scheduled for Saturday, March 28.

Muslims sue over bar from voucher program

TX AUSTIN — Four Muslim parents and three private schools have sued Texas leaders for excluding Islamic private schools from participating in the state's private school voucher program.

The two federal lawsuits ask the court to block the voucher program from discriminating on the basis of religion. The first suit, filed March 1 by a parent acting on behalf of two children who attend a Houston private school, names Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, Acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock and Education Commissioner Mike Morath as defendants. A second suit filed March 11 by three parents and three schools names Hancock and Mary Katherine Stout, education savings account program manager, as defendants.

Gov. Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 2 into law in 2025, which authorized the creation of a program that allows families to use public funds to pay for their children's private school or home-school education.

FACES



SCOTT A GARFITT, INVISION/AP

Jarvis Cocker and the rock band Pulp contributed "Begging for Change" to the benefit album "Help(2)."

More 'Help' has arrived

War Child UK releases benefit compilation album 30 years after the first

BY GLENN GAMBOA
Associated Press

War Child UK's first benefit compilation album was a stunning success when it debuted in 1995. Reaching No. 1 on the British charts, "Help" raised more than 1.25 million pounds (about \$1.938 million) for the nonprofit's support to children and their families in war-torn Bosnia.

Packed with unreleased songs from Britpop's elite artists — including Oasis, Blur and Radiohead — as well as a supergroup that included Paul McCartney and Paul Weller, it's no wonder that Rich Clarke, War Child UK's head of music, says the charity has been looking to re-create it ever since.

For a variety of reasons, an all-star follow-up to "Help" never materialized — until now. On March 6, "Help(2)" hit stores and streaming platforms, powered by unreleased songs from Arctic Monkeys, Olivia Rodrigo, Wet Leg and others, to raise funds and awareness for children suffering in numerous war zones, including Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan.

"I think it's a situation now where musicians feel not that they want to do something, but that they need to do something," Clarke said. "That's a powerful driver. And sometimes, things happen when they're meant to happen."

Jarvis Cocker finds inspiration in kids

Jarvis Cocker's connection to War Child UK stretches back to 1996, when his band Pulp donated the financial windfall from winning the prestigious Mercury Prize to the charity.

So when James Ford — who produced Pulp's first new album in 24 years, "More," last year — approached Cocker about contributing a song to a War Child UK compilation, he jumped at the chance.

"When the last one happened, it was something like 10% of the world's kids were living in poor areas, and now it's more like 20%," Cocker told The Associated Press. "And it's a strange thing, you know; childhood sets you up for the rest of your life, or it doesn't."

Pulp's contribution ended up being "Begging for Change," a song Cocker said he started 14 years ago but had trouble finishing. "Somehow, with it having the focus of trying to help some people and change their situation, I did manage to finish it," he said. "And I'm quite pleased with the result."

Part of that success on the energetic track came from the unusual recording process at Abbey Road Studios in London, Cocker said.

"I've never allowed people to film me singing in the studio because that's the time when I try and become unselfconscious," he said, adding he learned the session would be filmed by children working on a documentary of the process with director Jonathan Glazer. "I thought it was a good idea," Cocker said. "I mean, if you're going to do a thing for a charity that is supposed to help children in war zones, then it makes sense to capture it from a child's point of view."

Cocker even had some of the children form a choir that appears on the song.

A new generation of collaborators

Benefit compilations are part of a long tradition in indie music and a natural way for artists to get involved with charities and issues they want to support, said John Nolan, guitarist and singer in the rock bands Taking Back Sunday and Straylight Run.

"It's something that we can be a lot more hands-on with," said Nolan, who released the compilation "Music for Everyone, Vol. 2" in November as a fundraiser for the American Civil Liberties Union. "I think that's also why a lot of more underground bands take on compilations for causes too, because it's something you can be kind of DIY with."

The British band Black Country, New Road said it's important for artists to lend their creativity to causes and charities they believe in. Contributing its song "Strangers" to the War Child UK compilation is simply a continuation of its work, which includes fundraisers for Palestinian children.

"With what was going on in the world a couple of years ago, I think it became important to us that we became more aware and started questioning things and how we wanted to move as artists," said violinist Georgia Ellery of Black Country, New Road.

Graham Hastings of the Scottish band Young Fathers said it was a "no-brainer" to get involved with the "Help(2)" compilation.

"When you see children in these refugee camps, for me it's a sign of humanity failing for that to even occur," he said. "For us, the important thing is for people just to feel a general awareness about what's happening and why it's happening, and get active and get involved in the community."

Two long-lost episodes of 'Doctor Who' found

BY JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

Over six decades of "Doctor Who," the intergalactic adventurer's adversaries have included evil robots, rampaging yeti — and the BBC, which erased many early episodes of the now-iconic sci-fi TV series.

A film charity announced March 13 that it has found two previously lost 1960s episodes among the possessions of a deceased collector. They have been restored by BBC archivists and will be available next month on the broadcaster's streaming service.

The discovery leaves 95 episodes still missing from the adventures of a galaxy-hopping alien known as the Doctor that debuted in 1963.

"Doctor Who" — the "who" is an existential question, rather than the character's name — has become a television institution with millions of fans around the world. But the BBC's attitude to the show in its early years was careless. Scores of episodes were lost because the broadcaster wiped the tapes for reuse.

"The attitudes to archiving back in the '60s in television was really very different from today, and lots of material was junked," said Justin Smith, a cinema professor at England's De Montfort University.

Smith told the BBC that the charity found film cans containing the two rediscovered black-and-white episodes, "The Nightmare Begins" and "Devil's Planet," among the collection of a film aficionado who had died.

The episodes aired during the show's third series in 1965 and feature William Hartnell, the first of more than a dozen actors to play the Doctor, in a story with archvillains the Daleks — pepper pot-shaped metal aggressors whose favorite word is "Exterminate!"

The discovery is the first since 2013, when nine missing episodes were found in the storeroom of a television relay station in Nigeria.

The newfound episodes also feature Peter Purves, who played the Doctor's sidekick Steven Taylor in 46 installments of the show.

"Doctor Who" ran from 1963 to 1989 and was revived in 2005.

Universal will keep its movies in theaters for at least 5 weeks

From wire reports

Universal Pictures will now keep its new films in theaters for at least five weekends, a reversal from the studio's previous policy of at least 17 days that was set during the pandemic.

The change takes place immediately, the studio said March 12. That means it will apply to its newest film, the Colleen Hoover romance "Reminders of Him," which came out over the weekend.

Focus Features, Universal Pictures' specialty film arm, will keep its existing theatrical exclusivity policies, which vary on a case-by-case basis.

Chloé Zhao's "Hamnet," for instance, was in theaters for 99 days, while 2024's "Nosferatu" played for 58 days.

The amount of time films are available exclusively in theaters — known as "windowing" in industry jargon — has become a contentious topic of conversation in Hollywood.

That debate ramped up during the pandemic, when some studios shortened theatrical exclusivity periods in order to move films to release for video on demand or streaming.

Prior to the pandemic, those windows could be as long as 90 days. Now, the average is around 30 days.

Theater owners have argued that shorter windows cut into box-

office profits and train audiences to wait to watch a movie at home. Distributors have countered that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't necessarily work for smaller or midbudget films, which may find a bigger audience via at-home viewing.

Hahn to be Mother Gothel in Disney's new 'Tangled'

Mother knows best — Mother Hahn, that is.

Kathryn Hahn announced in an Instagram post last week that she will be playing Mother Gothel in

Disney's upcoming live-action reimagining of "Tangled."

"Hey, OOTD, I just found out what that stands for. So here's my outfit of the day," the "Agatha All Along" star said before stepping back to casually reveal she was wearing an oversize shirt plastered with Mother Gothel's face.

Hahn's announcement follows months of fan-casting, pleading and enthusiasm as speculation swirled around her potential involvement in the upcoming film.

Directed by Michael Gracey, the live-action remake of the film will reportedly star Teagan Croft and Milo Manheim as Rapunzel and Flynn Rider.



Hahn

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) published daily (except Saturday, Sunday, 25 December and 1 January) for 50 cents (Monday through Thursday) and one dollar on Friday by Stars and Stripes Pacific, OPC 706 BOX 7, APO AP 96301-9001. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, OPC 706 BOX 7, AP 96301-9001.

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OPINION

Three cheers for scuttling the Jones Act

BY ANASTASIA BODEN

Special to The Washington Post

Pain at the pump doesn't sell well, and the White House knows it. As the war in Iran has sent oil prices soaring, the Trump administration has reportedly located what could be considered a quintessential "America first" fix: issuing 30-day waivers to the Jones Act, a century-old law that has been hiking your energy bills for decades. A better route would be to deep-six it for good.

Formally known as the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, the statute requires any ship moving cargo between two U.S. ports to be built, owned, registered and crewed by Americans. What sounds patriotic on paper has proved a disaster in practice. The World Economic Forum has labeled it the most restrictive cabotage law in the world. Worse: It doesn't work. The Jones Act has shrunk the American shipping industry. Without foreign competition, U.S. shipbuilders have had no incentive to keep costs down. The Congressional Research Service has found that American-built ships can now cost six to eight times as much as equivalent vessels built in foreign yards.

The economics are simple: When vessels are that expensive, American shippers buy fewer of them. The Transportation Department counted 92 oceangoing Jones Act-compliant vessels as of 2024 — a 52% decline since 2000. Meanwhile, more than 60,000 commercial ships operate globally.

That collapse has real consequences for your energy bills. With so few compliant ships, Jones Act carriers can charge rates up to 10 times as high as other ships running similar routes. That isn't a market premium for superior service — it's a captivity tax. American oil producers in Texas can't load a competitively priced foreign tanker and send fuel to

refiners in New Jersey or heating oil to New England. They have to use the small, expensive, aging fleet of Jones Act ships. If those vessels aren't available, producers have to turn to trucks and trains: slower, pricier alternatives that the U.S. Maritime Administration estimates contribute to traffic congestion costing \$200 billion per year.

The problem is most acute in places that cannot easily fall back on roads or rails. Consider Hawaii, which is almost entirely dependent on petroleum imports for its electricity generation. Thanks to the Jones Act, transporting fuel to the state is extraordinarily expensive. Hawaiian consumers pay the highest electricity rates in the U.S. — nearly double the national average.

It's much the same in Puerto Rico. There is currently no Jones Act-compliant liquefied natural gas tanker in the American fleet — meaning the island, a U.S. territory, cannot buy LNG from American sources. The Dominican Republic, next door and not subject to the Jones Act, has no such problem.

Another victim is Alaska — where oil pumped on American soil faces a restricted and expensive path to the lower 48 states. The result is that moving domestic energy within the U.S. is often harder and more expensive than moving it internationally.

The original logic behind the law was well intentioned. After World War I, Congress wanted to ensure the U.S. maintained a strong merchant fleet. In wartime, the thinking went, we'd want plenty of American ships and sailors ready to mobilize. Yet as my organization, the Pacific Legal Foundation, has documented, the law has delivered the opposite. Instead of a thriving shipbuilding sector, the country has a handful of aging vessels kept afloat by the absence of competition. Of the 99 U.S. oceangoing vessels counted in 2019, 30 were

at least 25 years old.

Foreign-policy officials have repeatedly cited the act as an obstacle to efficient military operations. "I can't afford a lot of \$600 million ships," Navy Secretary Richard Spencer said in 2019, highlighting the Jones Act's inflationary effect on domestic building.

There's another matter: The law is blatantly illegal. The Constitution's port preference clause prohibits Congress from favoring the ports of one state over another. Yet that's exactly what the Jones Act does by encouraging international businesses to bypass Hawaiian and Alaskan ports. It also increases costs for Hawaiian and Alaskan businesses whose competitors can rely on cheaper, land-based options. Our client, the Koloa Rum Co., is a case in point. The Hawaii-based company pays nearly double for imported materials compared with competitors in the lower 48 states and nearly triple the shipping costs due to Jones Act routing requirements.

The Trump administration is expected to issue 30-day waivers to allow foreign vessels to help move fuel from Gulf Coast producers to East Coast refiners. That's a sensible emergency measure. Letting the market work — even temporarily — would help ease a supply crunch.

Yet the Jones Act isn't merely a problem during wars and crises. It frustrates American business every day and quietly bloats your heating, electricity and gas bills. A hundred-year-old protectionist law that has demonstrably failed at its goal of building a strong American merchant fleet, while making energy more expensive, deserves more than a temporary waiver. It ought to be scuttled.

Anastasia Boden is the director of constitutional scholarship at the Pacific Legal Foundation.

Japan's historic new leader will grow alliance with US

BY ARTHUR I. CYR

Sanae Takaichi made history last fall when she became the first female prime minister in the history of Japan. Her professional mentors have included the late, powerful former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Last month's general election reconfirmed her Liberal Democratic Party in power with a sweeping landslide victory, winning 316 of the 465 seats in the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Diet, the nation's parliament. Last year included agreement with the United States that Japan will provide \$550 million in new investment. Prime Minister Takaichi generally reflects the current Trump administration in emphasizing an assertive foreign policy, while maintaining Japan's approach of emphasizing the now firmly established alliance with Washington.

Today, Japan with the U.S. boasts one of the largest and most advanced economies in the world, and is a leader in support of international organizations. The nation in recent years has been an active participant in international security cooperation.

While China, North Korea and Russia often feature in the news thanks to threats and turbulence, Japan maintains a calmer course of sustained stability and expanding international involvement and leadership.

Since the end of the regional and global commercial surge of Japan three decades ago, national economic problems have often

seemed to dominate domestic debate, and attention from abroad. The problem of persistent economic sluggishness, the inability to reenergize the powerful engines of rapid growth, has preoccupied both policymakers and business leaders.

Japan, like the U.S., possesses a long-established advanced economy, with physical and human infrastructure providing stable support. Japan remains the world's second largest highly advanced and developed economy, after the U.S., though China is rising fast.

Abroad, Japan since 2016 has promoted the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) involving collaboration among the maritime democracies of the region. Australia, India and the U.S. are supportive, despite complications during the Biden administration.

Frustration of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and more general withdrawal of the U.S. from diplomatic leadership in the Pacific, has provided an opportunity for Japan to fill the void. In January 2017, President Donald Trump publicly issued a memorandum withdrawing the nation's signature from the TPP. Hillary Clinton, the Democratic Party's 2016 presidential nominee, also became critical of the ambitious free trade initiative.

In September 2019, Japan and the U.S. concluded an important trade promotion agreement. The lengthy negotiations strengthened cooperation.

Japan's neighbors are challenging. Sustained military buildup in China receives global attention and concern, along with the

wider regional arms race, and ongoing maritime disputes. North Korea's often-wild rhetoric, combined with nuclear weapons development, add further international frictions.

In the 19th century, as rapid industrial development began, Japan's leaders viewed Great Britain as the example to emulate. Both are maritime nations, each close to a continent containing difficult rivals. British leaders have had significant positive impact. Thomas Glover, for example, over decades in Japan nurtured industrial development. After World War I, Japan was attracted to alliance with Germany, with disastrous results.

Today, free markets, and global trade and investment, encourage stability and the rule of law. Fortunately, Japan's leadership in this often vexing but manageable environment is promising.

The Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) maritime exercises every other year involve over 25 nations. Japan and the U.S. are both key participants. The steady, substantial growth of China's military forces provides powerful incentive to jointly emphasize RIMPAC.

The complex challenges of our time require mature, informed foreign policies. Takaichi can build on the lengthy, overall successful record of predecessors, including Abe.

The strong Japan-U.S. relationship can be a foundation for economic and security regional cooperation in the Pacific.

Arthur I. Cyr is the author of "After the Cold War — American Foreign Policy, Europe and Asia."

Bizarro

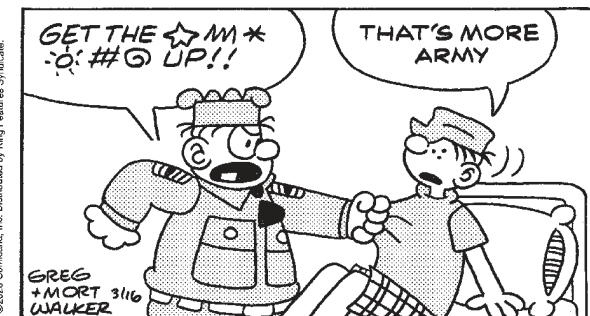
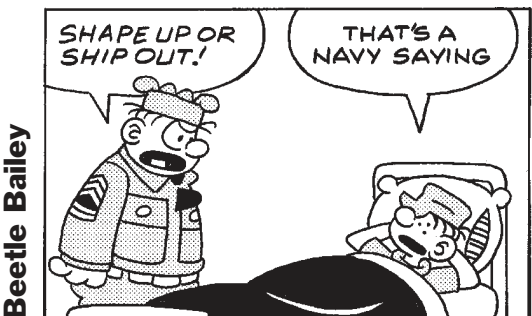
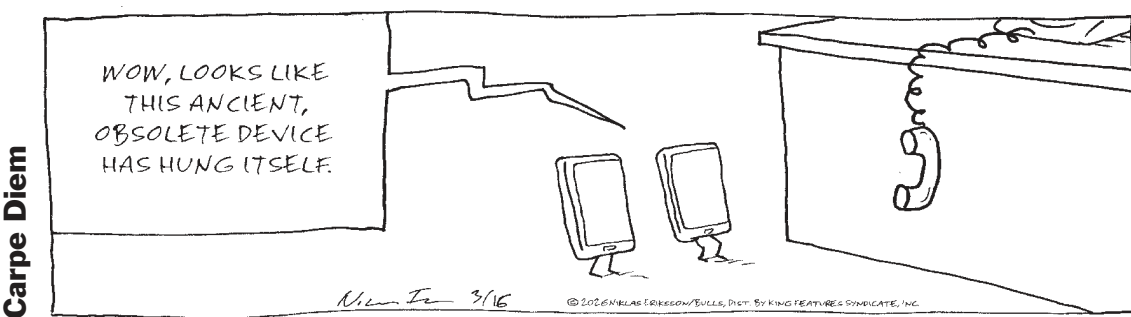
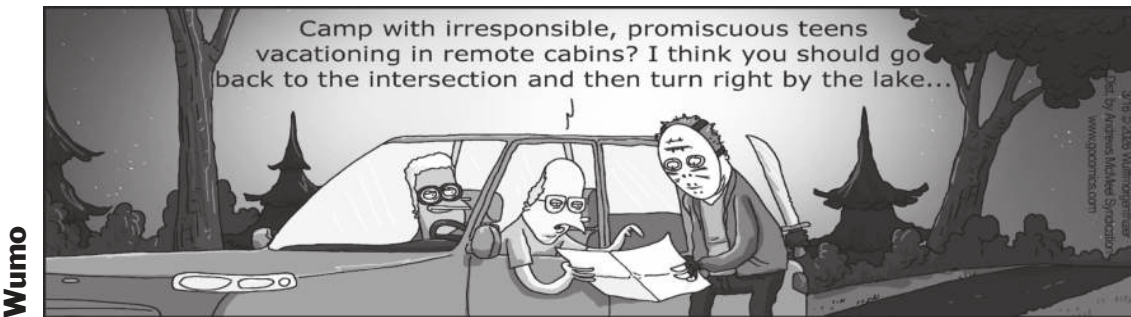
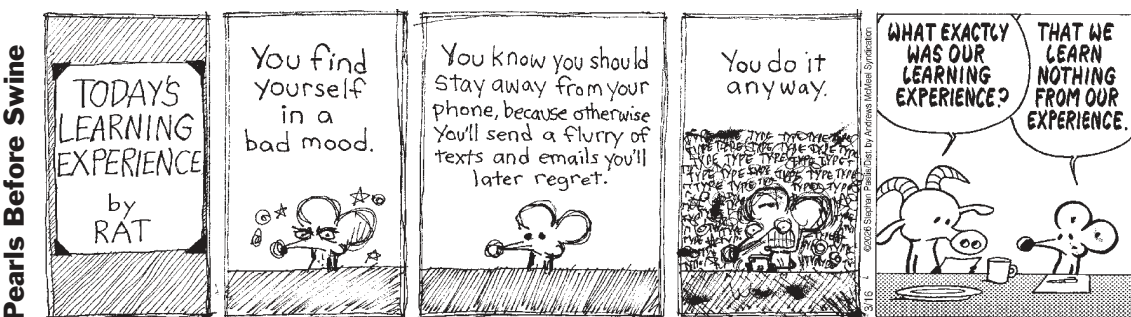
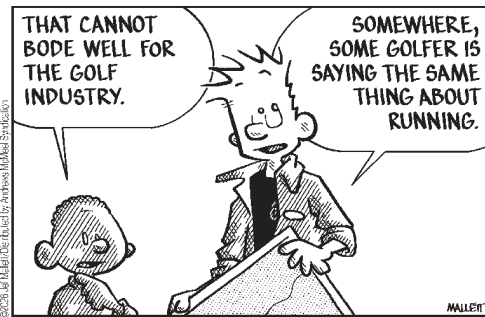
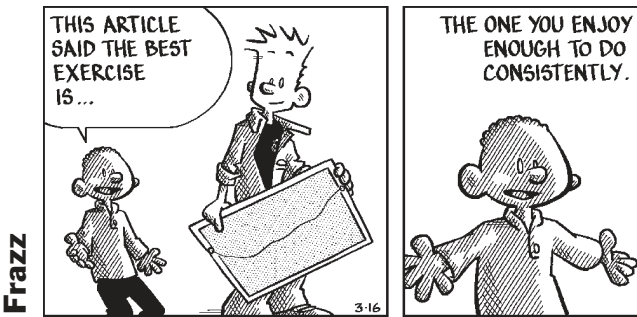


Loose Parts



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		



ACROSS

- 1 Low- — diet
- 5 Texter's "Enough!"
- 8 "In the Woods" author French
- 12 Lawyer Clooney
- 13 Possessed
- 14 Basra resident
- 15 Lima's land
- 16 Symbol of stability
- 18 Algebra, for calc., say
- 20 "Piece of cake!"
- 21 Fuzzy image
- 23 Wrestler Flair
- 24 Transparent fish
- 28 Eggy drinks
- 31 "— outta here!"
- 32 Fable writer
- 34 Narc's org.
- 35 Red planet
- 37 Old current-events film
- 39 Kšln cry
- 41 Ski lift type
- 42 Disregard
- 45 Classic game consoles
- 49 Honcho
- 51 DVR brand
- 52 Daring Knieval
- 53 Lass
- 54 List-ending abbr.
- 55 Hardy heroine
- 56 Campus VIPs

57 Copenhagen native

DOWN

- 1 "Li'l Abner" creator
- 2 Pt. of U.S.A.
- 3 Scarce
- 4 Book jacket promos
- 5 2006 film starring Helen Mirren as Elizabeth II
- 6 Dallas NBAer
- 7 March time
- 8 Bamboozle
- 9 Three-digit number
- 10 Highland refusals
- 11 With skill
- 17 Fish-fowl insert
- 19 Film lioness
- 22 Stopwatch button
- 24 Workout venue
- 25 Meadow
- 26 Puts in order
- 27 Purposely underestimates
- 29 "My word!"
- 30 Erie Canal mule
- 33 Jrs.' exam
- 36 Grimaces
- 38 Not suitable for kids
- 40 Regal letters
- 42 "Yeah, right!"
- 43 Donate
- 44 Hosp. tests
- 46 Actress Moreno
- 47 Nobelist Pavlov
- 48 Only
- 50 Corn spike

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

3-16

CRYPTOQUIP

QTAO MKTLN UIURIK QFT FDG
 RIXTUI GZVAIJ DY JMMVBM
 LN LBQDBYIJ NADBYG: QIIJK
 TO YFI NDXZ.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: I THOUGHT AT LEAST ONE WANDERING TRIBE MEMBER WOULD BE ANGRY, BUT THERE WAS NO MAD NOMAD.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals G

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Saturday's men's scores

TOURNAMENT	America East Championship
UMBC 74, Vermont 59	
American Athletic Semifinals	
South Florida 86, Charlotte 64 Wichita State 81, Tulsa 68	
Atlantic 10 Semifinals	
Dayton 70, Saint Louis 69 VCU 77, Saint Joseph's 64	
Atlantic Coast Conference Championship	
Duke 74, Virginia 70	
Big 12 Championship	
Arizona 79, Houston 74	
Big East Championship	
St. John's 72, UConn 52	
Big Ten Semifinals	
Michigan 68, Wisconsin 65 Purdue 73, UCLA 66	
Big West Championship	
Hawai'i 71, UC Irvine 64	
Conference USA Championship	
Kennesaw State 71, Louisiana Tech 60	
Ivy League Semifinals	
Yale 88, Cornell 76 Pennsylvania 62, Harvard 60, OT	
Mid-American Championship	
Akron 79, Toledo 76	
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Championship	
Howard 70, North Carolina Central 63	
Mountain West Championship	
Utah State 73, San Diego State 62	
Southeastern Conference Semifinals	
Vanderbilt 91, Florida 74 Arkansas 93, Ole Miss 90, OT	
Southwestern Athletic Conference Championship	
Prairie View A&M 72, Southern University 66	

Men's automatic bids

Long Island University (NEC), Tennessee State (OVC), Northern Iowa (MVC), High Point (Big South), Queens (ASUN), North Dakota State (Summit), Troy (Sun Belt), Furman (SoCon), Wright State (Horizon), Hofstra (CAA), Siena (MAAC), Gonzaga (WCC), McNeese (Southland), Lehigh (Patriot), Idaho (Big Sky), UMBC (America East), Howard (MEAC), Utah State (Mountain West), Arizona (Big 12), St. John's (Big East), Prairie View A&M (SWAC), Akron (MAC), Kennesaw State (Conference USA), Duke (ACC), Hawaii (Big West), Cal Baptist (WAC).

Saturday's women's scores

TOURNAMENT	American Athletic Championship
UTSA 54, Rice 40	
Big West Championship	
UC San Diego 60, Hawai'i 48	
Coastal Athletic Conference Semifinals	
Charleston 79, Stony Brook 49 Hofstra 53, Drexel 49, OT	
Conference USA Championship	
Missouri State 43, Louisiana Tech 38	
Ivy League Championship	
Princeton 63, Harvard 53	
Mid American Championship	
Miami (OH) 68, Toledo 58	
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Championship	
Howard 53, Norfolk State 46	
Missouri Valley Conference Semifinals	
Murray State 72, Northern Iowa 59 Evansville 75, Illinois State 70, OT	
Southwestern Athletic Conference Championship	
Southern University 73, Alabama State 56	
Western Athletic Conference Championship	
California Baptist 74, Abilene Christian 58	

AUTO RACING

Chinese Grand Prix

F1 Sunday
At Shanghai International Circuit Shanghai
Lap length: 5.00 kilometers
Start position in parentheses

- (1) Andrea Kimi Antonelli, Italy, Mercedes, 56 laps, 1:33:15.607, 25 points.
- (2) George Russell, Great Britain, Mercedes, 56, +5.515 seconds, 18.
- (3) Lewis Hamilton, Great Britain, Ferrari, 56, +25.267, 15.
- (4) Charles Leclerc, Monaco, Ferrari, 56, +28.894, 12.
- (10) Oliver Bearman, England, Haas, 56, +57.268, 10.
- (7) Pierre Gasly, France, Alpine, 56, +59.647, 8.
- (14) Liam Lawson, New Zealand, Racing Bulls, 56, +1:20.587, 6.
- (9) Isack Hadjar, France, Red Bull Racing, 56, +1:27.246, 4.
- (17) Carlos Sainz Jr., Spain, Williams, 55, 1L, 2.
- (12) Franco Colapinto, Argentina, Alpine, 55, 1L, 1.
- (11) Nico Hulkenberg, Germany, Audi F1 Team, 55, 1L.
- (15) Arvid Lindblad, Great Britain, Racing Bulls, 55, 1L.
- (19) Valtteri Bottas, Finland, Cadillac, 55, 1L.
- (13) Esteban Ocon, France, Haas, 55, 1L.
- (21) Sergio Perez, Mexico, Cadillac, 55, 1L.
- (8) Max Verstappen, Netherlands, Red Bull Racing, did not finish, 45, 11L.
- (18) Fernando Alonso, Spain, Aston Martin, did not finish, 32, 24L.
- (20) Lance Stroll, Canada, Aston Martin, did not finish, 9, 47L.

Driver Standings

- George Russell, Great Britain, Mercedes, 51 points.
- Andrea Kimi Antonelli, Italy, Mercedes, 47.
- Charles Leclerc, Monaco, Ferrari, 34.
- Lewis Hamilton, Great Britain, Ferrari, 33.
- Oliver Bearman, England, Haas, 17.
- Lando Norris, Great Britain, McLaren, 15.
- Pierre Gasly, France, Alpine, 9.
- Max Verstappen, Netherlands, Red Bull Racing, 8.
- Liam Lawson, New Zealand, Racing Bulls, 8.
- Arvid Lindblad, Great Britain, Racing Bulls, 4.
- Isack Hadjar, France, Red Bull Racing, 4.
- Oscar Piastrri, Australia, McLaren, 3.
- Carlos Sainz Jr., Spain, Williams, 2.
- Gabriel Bortoleto, Brazil, Audi F1 Team, 2.
- Franco Colapinto, Argentina, Alpine, 1.

Manufacturers Standings

- Mercedes, 98.
- Ferrari, 67.
- McLaren, 18.
- Haas, 17.
- Red Bull Racing, 12.
- Racing Bulls, 12.
- Alpine, 10.
- Audi F1 Team, 2.
- Williams, 2.
- Cadillac, 0.
- Aston Martin, 0.

The LiUNA

NASCAR O'Reilly Saturday
At Las Vegas Motor Speedway Las Vegas.
Lap length: 1.50 miles
Start position in parentheses

- (2) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 200 laps, 0 points.
- (23) Chase Briscoe, Toyota, 200, 0.
- (3) Sheldon Creed, Chevrolet, 200, 45.
- (9) Justin Allgaier, Chevrolet, 200, 53.
- (4) Sammy Smith, Chevrolet, 200, 32.
- (7) Jesse Love, Chevrolet, 200, 43.
- (17) Connor Zilisch, Chevrolet, 200, 0.
- (11) Corey Day, Chevrolet, 200, 36.
- (14) William Sawalich, Toyota, 200, 28.
- (13) Austin Hill, Chevrolet, 200, 29.
- (18) Carson Kvappil, Chevrolet, 200, 27.
- (12) Parker Retzlaff, Chevrolet, 200, 25.
- (5) Brandon Jones, Toyota, 200, 25.
- (29) Kyle Sieg, Chevrolet, 200, 23.
- (27) Daniel Dye, Ford, 200, 0.
- (32) Josh Williams, Chevrolet, 200, 21.
- (24) Harrison Burton, Toyota, 200, 20.
- (16) Gabe Custer, Chevrolet, 200, 0.
- (8) Rajah Caruth, Chevrolet, 200, 18.
- (26) Brennan Poole, Chevrolet, 199, 17.
- (22) Patrick Staropoli, Chevrolet, 199, 16.
- (33) Blaine Perkins, Chevrolet, 199, 15.
- (38) Josh Billicki, Chevrolet, 199, 14.
- (10) Jeremy Clements, Chevrolet, 199, 13.
- (19) Austin Green, Chevrolet, 199, 12.
- (30) Lavar Scott, Chevrolet, 199, 11.
- (15) Jeb Burton, Chevrolet, 199, 10.
- (37) Mason Maggio, Chevrolet, 199, 9.
- (36) Joey Gase, Toyota, 199, 8.
- (35) Ryan Ellis, Chevrolet, 198, 7.
- (25) Dean Thompson, Toyota, 198, 6.
- (34) Nathan Byrd, Chevrolet, 198, 5.
- (20) Ryan Sieg, Chevrolet, 197, 4.
- (31) Anthony Alfredo, Chevrolet, 197, 3.
- (1) Sam Mayer, Chevrolet, 196, 12.
- (28) Chandler Smith, Ford, ignition, 184, 0.
- (6) Taylor Gray, Toyota, accident, 148, 16.
- (21) Nicholas Sanchez, Ford, fuel-pump, 141, 1.

Race Statistics

Average Speed of Race Winner: 116.821 mph.
Time of Race: 2 hours, 34 minutes, 5 seconds.
Margin of Victory: 2.557 seconds.
Caution Flags: 8 for 42 laps.
Lead Changes: 16 among 9 drivers.
Lap Leaders: S.Mayer 0-5; S.Creed 6; S.Mayer 7-33; J.Allgaier 34-48; C.Briscoe 49; J.Love 50-56; T.Gray 57; J.Love 58-64; J.Allgaier 65-93; C.Briscoe 94; J.Love 95-104; J.Allgaier 105-108; J.Love 109-120; T.Gray 121-140; C.Day 141-149; B.Jones 150-153; K.Larson 154-200
Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Led, Laps Led): J.Allgaier, 3 times for 48 laps; K.Larson, 1 time for 47 laps; J.Love, 4 times for 36 laps; S.Mayer, 2 times for 32 laps; T.Gray, 2 times for 21 laps; C.Day, 1 time for 9 laps; B.Jones, 1 time for 4 laps; C.Briscoe, 2 times for 2 laps; S.Creed, 1 time for 1 lap.
Wins: J.Allgaier, 1; A.Hill, 1; S.Creed, 1.
Top 16 in Points: 1. J.Allgaier, 237; 2. J.Love, 224; 3. A.Hill, 208; 4. S.Creed, 188; 5. C.Kvappil, 173; 6. S.Smith, 164; 7. C.Day, 154; 8. R.Caruth, 137; 9. P.Retzlaff, 129; 10. S.Mayer, 122; 11. B.Jones, 120; 12. T.Gray, 110; 13. J.Burton, 104; 14. B.Poole, 97; 15. W.Sawalich, 95; 16. P.Staropoli, 87.

TENNIS

BNP Paribas Open

At Indian Wells Tennis Garden Indian Wells, Calif.
Purse: \$9,415,725
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses

Men's Singles Semifinals

Jannik Sinner (2), Italy, def. Alexander Zverev (4), Germany, 6-2, 6-4.
Daniil Medvedev (11), Russia, def. Carlos Alcaraz (1), Spain, 6-3, 7-6 (3).

Women's Singles Semifinals

Aryna Sabalenka (1), Belarus, def. Linda Noskova (14), Czechia, 6-3, 6-4.
Elena Rybakina (3), Kazakhstan, def. Elena Svitolina (9), Ukraine, 7-5, 6-4.

Men's Double Championship

Guido Andreozzi, Argentina, and Manuel Guinard, France, def. Arthur Rinderknech, France, and Valentin Vacherot, Monaco, 7-6 (3), 6-3.

Women's Doubles Championship

Taylor Townsend, United States, and Katerina Siniakova (3), Czechia, def. Aleksandra Krunic, Serbia, and Anna Danilina (5), Kazakhstan, 7-6 (4), 6-4.

Mixed Doubles Championship

Belinda Bencic, Switzerland, and Flavio Cobolli, Italy, def. Gabriela Dabrowski, Canada, and Lloyd Glasspool (1), Britain, 6-3, 2-6, 10-7.
Megarasay Hotels Open 3 Results

Megarasay Hotels Open

Sunday Women's Singles Championship

Anhelina Kalinina, Ukraine, def. Tamara Zidansek, Slovenia, 6-0, 6-3.

DEALS

Saturday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball American League

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Optioned 2Bs Kyren Paris and Christian Moore to Salt Lake (PCL).
SEATTLE MARINERS — Optioned LHP Robinson Ortiz to Tacoma (PCL).

National League

CINCINNATI REDS — Reassigned RHP Lyon Richardson to minor league camp.
NEW YORK METS — Claimed LHP Richard Lovelady of waivers from Washington. Placed RHP Justin Hagenman on 60-day IR.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Optioned RHP Alan Rangel to Lehigh Valley (IL).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Optioned LHPs Jake Eder, Mitchell Parker and Andrew Alvarez to Rochester (IL).

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

BROOKLYN NETS — Signed G Malachi Smith to a 10-day contract.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Signed QB Josh Johnson to a one-year contract.
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Signed OL Mike Caliendo to a one-year contract.
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Signed QB Trey Lance to a one-year contract.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

DETROIT RED WINGS — Recalled F John Leonard from Grand Rapids (AHL) under emergency conditions.
NEW YORK RANGERS — Activated F J.T. Miller from injured reserve.
OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled D Lassi Thomson from Belleville (AHL).
PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Recalled F Garrett Wilson from Lehigh Valley (AHL).
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS — Placed D Ryan Graves on injured reserve.
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Reassigned F Conor Geekie to Syracuse (AHL). Recalled D Steven Santini from Syracuse.
UTAH MAMMOTH — Assigned D Maksymilian Szuber to Tucson (AHL).

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

COLORADO RAPIDS — Agreed to terms with F Mamadou Billo Diop to a first-team contract through the 2027-28 season with options for the 2028-29 and 2029-30 seasons.

COLLEGE

TENNESSEE TECH — Hired Tobin Anderson as head coach of Men's basketball.

GOLF

Players Championship

Saturday
At TPC Sawgrass
Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.
Purse: \$25 million
Yardage: 7,352; Par: 72
Third Round

Ludvig Aberg	69-63-71-203 -13
Michael Thorbjornsen	74-65-67-206 -10
Cameron Young	68-67-72-207 -9
Corey Conners	69-67-72-208 -8
Matt Fitzpatrick	70-69-69-208 -8
Brian Harman	75-64-69-208 -8
Viktor Hovland	69-70-69-208 -8
Xander Schauffele	69-65-74-208 -8
Justin Thomas	68-68-72-208 -8
Jacob Bridgeman	70-68-71-209 -7
Robert MacIntyre	72-72-65-209 -7
Austin Smotherman	67-72-70-209 -7
Sepp Straka	67-70-72-209 -7
Sahith Theegala	67-74-68-209 -7
Russell Henley	68-71-71-210 -6
Ryo Hisatsune	71-69-70-210 -6
William Mouw	69-72-69-210 -6
Justin Rose	72-68-70-210 -6
Keegan Bradley	77-66-68-211 -5
Brooks Koepka	72-70-69-211 -5
Maverick McNealy	67-71-73-211 -5
Patrick Rodgers	70-70-71-211 -5
Alex Smalley	70-70-71-211 -5
J.J. Spaun	71-72-68-211 -5
Sudarshan Yellamaraju	73-72-66-211 -5
Akshay Bhatia	71-71-70-212 -4
Jason Day	70-70-72-212 -4
Tommy Fleetwood	69-70-73-212 -4
Chris Gotterup	71-73-68-212 -4
Min Woo Lee	72-70-70-212 -4
Keith Mitchell	72-68-72-212 -4
Scottie Scheffler	72-73-67-212 -4
Sam Burns	76-68-69-213 -3
Joe Highsmith	70-75-68-213 -3
Max Homa	71-72-70-213 -3
Si Woo Kim	73-72-68-213 -3
Wyndham Clark	73-70-71-214 -2
Ryan Gerard	73-68-73-214 -2
Max McGreevy	72-72-70-214 -2
Chad Ramey	72-69-73-214 -2
Matti Schmid	70-73-71-214 -2
Nick Taylor	74-70-70-214 -2

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
NYC FC	3	0	1	10	11	3
Nashville	3	0	1	10	8	2
Inter Miami CF	2	1	1	7	6	6
New York	2	1	1	7	4	5
D.C. United	2	2	0	6	4	4
Charlotte FC	1	1	2	5	4	5
Chicago	1	2	1	4	5	4
Toronto FC	1	2	1	4	4	7
Cincinnati	1	2	0	3	2	2
Atlanta	1	3	0	3	5	8
Washington	1	3	0	3	4	10
Orlando City	1	3	0	3	5	12
Columbus	0	2	2	2	4	6
New England	0	2	0	0	1	5
Philadelphia	0	4	0	0	2	7

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LAFC	4	0	0	12	8	0
San Diego FC	3	0	1	10	11	3
Vancouver	3	0	0	9	8	1
San Jose	3	0	0	9	6	0
Real Salt Lake	3	1	0	9	7	5
Seattle	2	1	0	6	4	2
Colorado	2	2	0	6	7	6
Houston	2	1	0	6	5	5
FC Dallas	1	1	2	5	6	6
LA Galaxy	1	2	1	4	6	7
Minn. United	1	1	1	4	4	5
Austin FC	1	2	1	4	5	7
Sporting KC	1	2	1	4	4	7
Portland	1	3	0	3	6	11
St Louis City	0	3	1	1	1	6

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

Saturday, March 14

New York 1, Toronto FC 1, tie
Atlanta 3, Philadelphia 1
Nashville 1, Columbus 0
Miami 0, Charlotte FC 0, tie
New York City FC 3, Colorado 1
Orlando City 2, CF Montreal 1
D.C. United 2, Chicago 1
San Diego FC 3, FC Dallas 3, tie
Houston 3, Portland 2
Sporting Kansas City 2, LA Galaxy 1
Real Salt Lake 2, Austin FC 1
Los Angeles FC 2, St Louis City 0

Sunday, March 15

Cincinnati at New England
Minnesota at Vancouver
Seattle at San Jose

Saturday, March 21

Columbus at Toronto FC
Chicago at Philadelphia
Orlando City at Nashville
D.C. United at Atlanta
New York at Charlotte FC
Houston at FC Dallas
Colorado at Sporting Kansas City
New England at St Louis City
Los Angeles FC at Austin FC
San Jose at Vancouver

Sunday, March 22

CF Montreal at Cincinnati
Miami at New York City FC
Seattle at Minnesota
LA Galaxy at Portland
Real Salt Lake at San Diego FC

NWSL

W L T Pts GF GA

Bay FC	1	0	0	3	2	1
Kansas City	1	0	0	3	2	1
North Carolina	1	0	0	3	2	1
Gotham FC	1	0	0	3	1	0
Houston	1	0	0	3	1	0
Portland	1	0	0	3	1	0
Angel City	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chicago	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orlando	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seattle	0	0	0	0	0	0
Denver FC	0	1	0	0	1	2
Louisville	0	1	0	0	1	2
Utah Royals FC	0	1	0	0	1	2
Boston FC	0	1	0	0		

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Buffalo	67	41	20	6	88	235	200
Tampa Bay	65	40	21	4	84	231	182
Montreal	65	36	19	10	82	230	216
Boston	66	37	23	6	80	219	207
Detroit	67	36	23	8	80	195	201
Ottawa	65	33	23	9	75	218	201
Florida	65	33	29	3	69	197	214
Toronto	67	28	27	12	68	211	236

Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	66	42	18	6	90	234	192
Pittsburgh	66	33	18	15	81	223	202
N.Y. Islanders	67	38	24	5	81	197	191
Columbus	66	34	21	11	79	212	208
Philadelphia	66	31	23	12	74	191	205
Washington	68	33	27	8	74	212	203
New Jersey	66	33	31	2	68	176	201
N.Y. Rangers	66	28	30	8	64	189	205

Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	65	44	12	9	97	247	163
Dallas	66	42	14	10	94	232	178
Minnesota	67	38	17	12	88	224	192
Utah	67	34	27	6	74	208	188
Nashville	65	29	27	9	67	194	222
Winnipeg	65	27	28	10	64	185	200
St. Louis	66	27	29	10	64	175	219
Chicago	66	25	30	11	61	175	213

Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	67	31	22	14	76	220	209
Anaheim	66	36	27	3	75	219	230
Edmonton	67	32	26	9	73	235	231
San Jose	64	32	26	6	70	200	222
Seattle	65	30	26	9	69	185	197
Los Angeles	66	27	24	15	69	176	200
Calgary	66	26	33	7	59	165	207
Vancouver	66	20	38	8	48	171	246

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

Friday's games
 Los Angeles 3, N.Y. Islanders 2
 St. Louis 3, Edmonton 2, OT

Saturday's games
 Ottawa 2, Anaheim 0
 Boston 3, Washington 2, SO
 Winnipeg 3, Colorado 1
 N.Y. Rangers 4, Minnesota 2
 Carolina 4, Tampa Bay 2
 N.Y. Islanders 3, Calgary 2
 New Jersey 6, Los Angeles 4
 Buffalo 3, Toronto 2, SO
 San Jose 4, Montreal 2
 Columbus 2, Philadelphia 1, SO
 Dallas 3, Detroit 2, OT
 Pittsburgh 4, Utah 3
 Seattle 5, Vancouver 2
 Vegas 4, Chicago 0

Sunday's games
 St. Louis at Winnipeg
 San Jose at Ottawa
 Anaheim at Montreal
 Toronto at Minnesota
 Florida at Seattle
 Nashville at Edmonton

Monday's games
 Boston at New Jersey
 Calgary at Detroit
 Los Angeles at N.Y. Rangers
 Utah at Dallas
 Pittsburgh at Colorado

Tuesday's games
 Boston at Montreal
 Carolina at Columbus
 N.Y. Islanders at Toronto
 Minnesota at Chicago
 Nashville at Winnipeg
 San Jose at Edmonton
 Buffalo at Vegas
 Florida at Vancouver
 Tampa Bay at Seattle

Scoring leaders				
Through Saturday				
	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	67	37	74	111
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	64	44	65	109
Nikita Kucherov, TB	61	34	72	106
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	64	34	62	96
Macklin Celebrini, SJ	64	35	59	94
Mark Scheifele, WPG	65	30	51	81
Martin Necas, COL	62	31	49	80
David Pastrnak, BOS	61	24	55	79
Jason Robertson, DAL	66	36	43	79
Kirill Kaprizov, MIN	67	38	41	79

ROUNDUP

Bruins top Caps in 9th round of SO

Associated Press
 WASHINGTON — Charlie McAvoy scored twice and Fraser Minten had the shootout winner as the Boston Bruins beat the Washington Capitals 3-2 on Saturday.

Minten beat Washington's Logan Thompson with a backhand shot in the ninth round of the shootout to give the Bruins their third win in five games and help Boston gain ground in the Eastern Conference wild-card race.

Rasmus Sandin had a goal and an assist and Matt Roy also scored for the Capitals, who have lost two of their last three.

After a scoreless first period, the Capitals picked up their pressure to open the second, and it paid off. Just 1:15 minutes into the middle period, Roy fired an 86-mph slap shot past Boston's Jeremy Swayman and into the top corner to give Washington the lead. It was Roy's his first goal since Nov. 17, ending a 45-game scoring drought.

Minutes later, McAvoy fired a one-timer through traffic and past Thompson to even the score at 1. McAvoy has points in six straight games and 15 of his last 16 contests overall.

Sandin became the third defenseman to get on the board when his shot from point knuckled past Swayman, giving the Caps a 2-1 edge.

Following a couple of power-play chances for the Bruins, including a 5-on-3 opportunity halfway through the third, McAvoy tied the game by deflecting Pavel Zacha's shot past Thompson and eventually forcing overtime.

Swayman had 25 saves in the win. Thompson stopped 32 shots in the loss.

Senators 2, Ducks 0: Linus Ullmark made 23 saves for his second shutout of the season and host Ottawa blanked Anaheim.

Michael Amadio and Thomas Chabot scored for Ottawa. Shane Pinto had two assists. It was the 14th shutout of Ullmark's career. The Senators have won four of five.

Ville Husso stopped 27 shots for Anaheim.

Jets 3, Avalanche 1: Kyle Connor reached 30 goals for a franchise-record eighth time and added an assist, Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves and host Winnipeg beat NHL-leading Colorado.

Connor broke a tie with Ilya Kovalchuk for the most 30-goal seasons in Thrashers/Jets history. Connor has reached the 30-goal mark in every season of his nine-year NHL career except for the 56-game COVID-19 shortened campaign when he had 26.

Mackenzie Blackwood made 15 saves for the Avalanche. They had



Nick Wass/AP

Boston Bruins center Fraser Minten, right, scores the game-winning goal past Washington Capitals goaltender Logan Thompson during the shootout on Saturday in Washington.

won six in a row on the road.

Rangers 4, Wild 2: Igor Shesterkin made 46 saves and Vladislav Gavrikov had a goal and two assists as New York extended its winning streak to four games with a road win over Minnesota.

Noah Laba, Jaroslav Chmelar and Vincent Trocheck also scored for New York, which won for the fifth time in six games despite being outshot 48-18.

Matt Boldy and Danila Yurov scored for the Wild, who dropped their second straight and lost for the third time in four games. Filip Gustavsson had 14 saves.

Hurricanes 4, Lightning 2: Sebastian Aho and Andrei Svechnikov each had a goal and an assist and visiting Carolina defeated Tampa Bay.

Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour coached his 600th career game for the franchise and picked up his 367th career win, the most for a head coach at the 600-game mark, besting Tampa Bay's Jon Cooper, who set the previous record of 364.

Yanni Gourde and Charle-Edouard D'Astous scored for Tampa Bay, which fell to 3-7 since the Olympic break. Andrei Vasilevskiy finished with 31 saves.

Islanders 3, Flames 2: Simon Holmstrom scored twice and host New York raced to an early lead and held on to beat Calgary.

Casey Cizikas also scored for New York and David Rittich made 30 saves as the Islanders won for the third time in four games.

Mikael Backlund and Blake Coleman scored for Calgary, which slipped to 2-5-1 in its last eight games.

Devils 6, Kings 4: Jack Hughes

scored the go-ahead goal with 2:29 to play and Jake Allen made 27 saves as host New Jersey edged Los Angeles.

Hughes put the Devils ahead 5-4 in the seesaw game with a power-play goal. Nico Hischier scored twice and Cody Glass, Arseny Gritsyuk and Timo Meier — with a last minute empty-netter — also scored.

Anze Kopitar scored twice for Los Angeles — to establish a Kings franchise points record — and Artemi Panarin and Taylor Ward also scored.

Sabres 3, Maple Leafs 2 (SO): Jack Quinn scored the tying goal and also connected in a shootout, Alex Tuch ended the tiebreaker and host Buffalo beat Toronto to rebound from its first loss since the Olympic break.

Buffalo was coming off a 2-1 home loss to Washington on Thursday night that ended an eight-game winning streak. The Atlantic Division-leading Sabres stretched their advantage over second-place Tampa Bay to four points and remained two points behind Carolina in the Eastern Conference.

Max Domi scored for Toronto in his 800th NHL game. Dakota Joshua also scored, and Joseph Woll made 30 saves.

Sharks 4, Canadiens 2: Macklin Celebrini had two goals and an assist to lead San Jose to a road win over Montreal.

Collin Graf had a goal and two assists and Mario Ferraro also scored for San Jose, which ended Montreal's three-game winning streak.

Blue Jackets 2, Flyers 1 (SO): Kirill Marchenko scored his 25th

goal and lifted a backhand over Dan Vladar in the third round of a shootout to give Columbus a road victory over Philadelphia.

The Blue Jackets extended their points streak to nine games as they fight Detroit for the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. They are 5-0-4 during the streak.

Stars 3, Red Wings 2 (OT): Defenseman Thomas Harley scored 2:05 into overtime to give streaking Dallas a home win over Detroit.

Wyatt Johnston had a goal and an assist, and Michael Bunting also scored for the Stars. Jake Oettinger stopped 22 of 24 shots. Harley scored his seventh OT goal in regular-season games.

The Stars are 14-0-1 in their last 15 games, matching the longest point streak in club history. Their 1998-99 Stanley Cup team had a streak of 12 wins and three ties.

Penguins 4, Mammoth 3: Noel Acciari scored the go-ahead goal at the 8:03 mark of the third period to lift visiting Pittsburgh past Utah.

Acciari won a battle for the puck with Nick Schmaltz and scored on a close-range snap shot to help the Penguins complete a rally from an early two-goal deficit.

Golden Knights 4, Blackhawks 0: Pavel Dorofeyev recorded two goals and an assist for the second straight game and Adin Hill had his first shutout in a year as host Vegas defeated Chicago.

The victory put the Golden Knights back into first place in the Pacific Division with 76 points, one ahead of Anaheim, which lost 2-0 at Ottawa on Saturday.

AUTO RACING/BASEBALL

Antonelli, just 19, claims 1st F1 win

Associated Press

SHANGHAI — He's been defined by being Lewis Hamilton's successor and George Russell's teammate. Now Kimi Antonelli is a Formula 1 race-winner in his own right, and the second-youngest in history.

The 19-year-old Italian pulled clear of an entertaining battle between Russell and the two Ferraris to take a commanding win at the Chinese Grand Prix on Sunday and share the podium with his teammate and Hamilton, the seven-time champion he replaced last year.

"I'm speechless. I'm about to cry, to be honest," Antonelli said, holding back tears. "Thank you so much to my team because they helped me to achieve this dream."

It's a vindication of the gamble Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff took in picking the youngster, who'd joined Mercedes' junior program at just 11, to replace an all-time great when Hamilton moved to Ferrari for 2025. There were plenty of doubters when Antonelli crashed 10 minutes into his practice debut in 2024.

"Many said it was just too early last year, and obviously we asked ourselves that question, whether it was too much to throw him into this pressure cooker," Wolff told Sky Sport Germany.

"One year with ups and downs and he's young. We have to forgive him these mistakes, and now he's in the second Grand Prix (of 2026) and brings it home ruthlessly. It's good."

The 19-year-old Italian was the youngest pole winner and briefly lost the lead to Hamilton at the start but retook it soon after and was in control the rest of the way.

Locking up a tire near the end caused him "a little bit of a heart attack," but he made it to the end to celebrate with his father, who once sneaked his then seven-year-old son into the F1 paddock hidden

in a stack of tires to get closer to the action.

It was another 1-2 finish for Mercedes to start the season as Russell came through a battle with both Ferraris to finish second. Hamilton was third for his long-awaited first Grand Prix podium finish for Ferrari.

The only driver younger than Antonelli to win a Grand Prix was Max Verstappen, who was 18 when he took his first victory in 2016. He's the first Italian to win since Giancarlo Fisichella in 2006, five months before Antonelli was born.

The new regulations again produced a dramatic fight for position between Mercedes and the fast-starting Ferraris as Russell fought his way past Charles Leclerc and Hamilton in a multi-lap battle with numerous changes of position. That allowed Antonelli to build his lead at the front.

Even after Russell had pulled away to secure second place, teammates Leclerc and Hamilton kept up their own fight for third. "This is quite a fun battle," Leclerc exclaimed over the radio.

Verstappen was running sixth when his car lost power and he had to limp back to the pits.

Formula 1 champion Lando Norris and his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri were both unable to start after encountering technical problems minutes before the race began.

Piastri was due to start fifth and Norris sixth. Norris was in his car in the pits but didn't leave for the grid, before Piastri was then withdrawn from the grid.

McLaren said it found "two different electrical problems on the power unit side" after an investigation.

The race took place hours after it announced next month's races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia will not go ahead because of the war in the Middle East.



ANDY WONG/AP

Mercedes driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli, of Italy, celebrates after he won the Chinese Grand Prix race in Shanghai, China, on Sunday.



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

United States right fielder Aaron Judge, left, and first baseman Bryce Harper, right, celebrate after they scored during the third inning of a World Baseball Classic quarterfinal game against Canada on Friday.

US refocuses after shocker, edges Canada to advance

BY KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

HOUSTON — The United States is heading to the semifinals of the World Baseball Classic after a "different level of focus" helped this All-Star-studded team rebound from a shocking loss.

The U.S. beat Canada 5-3 on Friday night for a spot in the semifinals Sunday against the Dominican Republic. The big win came after an 8-6 loss to Italy in pool play left them needing help to advance to Friday's game.

"Guys really locked in," Yankees star Aaron Judge said. "We saw a different level of focus at our workout the other day and then even pregame today. It felt like the boys were locked and ready to go."

The loss to Italy elicited criticism of the team and particularly manager Mark DeRosa after he prematurely said on a television interview the morning of the loss to Italy that: "Our ticket's punched to the quarterfinals."

Judge said he knows a lot of people had negative things to say about them after the Italy game, but they didn't pay it any mind.

"There's a lot of noise that's been going on with that," he said. "And I think it just speaks volumes to the players in this room, the manager we've got, everybody, that no matter what's being said about us, what's going on, we still got a job to do on the field."

Scoreboard

World Baseball Classic

Quarterfinals Friday, March 13

Dominican Republic 10, South Korea 0, 7 innings
United States 5, Canada 3

Saturday, March 14

Italy 8, Puerto Rico 6
Venezuela 8, Japan 5

Semifinals Sunday, March 15

United States at Dominican Republic

Monday, March 16

Venezuela at Italy

Championship Tuesday, March 17

Semifinals winners

First baseman Bryce Harper echoed Judge's sentiments that they didn't worry about what outsiders were saying about the team.

"People are going to have their opinion about us," he said. "I don't think any of them are going to be sitting at our dinner table or our Thanksgiving dinner, so it doesn't really matter what anybody says, that's always been my call on that kind of stuff."

The Americans did eventually punch their ticket to the quarterfinals when Italy beat Mexico to win Pool B and give the U.S. second place.

Starter Logan Webb, who threw 4½ scoreless innings Friday night, said the team's path to the semifinals was not ideal but he was proud that the guys got the job

done.

"It kind of feels like a second chance and ... I felt like it was a newfound energy today," he said.

Third baseman Alex Bregman appreciated the professionalism in the clubhouse as the team dealt with the adversity from the loss to Italy.

"One of the biggest things that you see around all these great players is everyone's present and they're not worried about the future or the past," he said. "They're worried about that game, that moment, that pitch, the next pitch. And it was just a good, good response today."

Now the challenge gets even bigger as the U.S. faces a Dominican team that beat South Korea 10-0 Friday in seven innings to advance to the semifinals.

The Americans were to send reigning NL Cy Young Award winner Paul Skenes to the mound Sunday to contend with a roster that is also chock full of All-Stars.

"I expect it to be like one of the best games of all time," DeRosa said.

Judge is thrilled that the team is heading to Miami and can't wait for what's waiting for the U.S. there.

"The boys are excited, that's for sure," he said. "Definitely getting a taste for playoff atmosphere in March, definitely gets the juices flowing a little bit."

BASEBALL

Unbeaten Italy bound for WBC semifinals

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

HOUSTON — Warm up the espresso machine and chill the wine, Italy is heading to the World Baseball Classic semifinals.

The Azzurri continued their perfect WBC run with an 8-6 win over Puerto Rico on Saturday to earn their first trip to the semifinals.

“It’s amazing,” Italy manager Francisco Cervelli said. “This is great. This is one of the best chapters of my life. It’s incredible. This group, it’s phenomenal.”

They advance to Miami to face Venezuela, which knocked off defending champion Japan later Saturday, on Monday night.

Italy didn’t homer Saturday after hitting a dozen through its first four wins — and downing espresso shots after each dinger. But its offense still packed enough of a jolt to send the Puerto Ricans home after they had made the quarterfinals for a sixth time.

J.J. D’Orazio doubled with three RBIs and Andrew Fischer drove in two runs as Italy kept up its charmed run. The Azzurri trailed only briefly after a leadoff home run by Willi Castro before scoring four runs in the first inning to go on top for good. Puerto Rico rallied late, scoring four runs in the eighth, but Greg Weissert allowed one hit in a scoreless ninth for a five-out save.

Just as they have after every victory in this tournament, Italy celebrated with celebratory bottles of wine in the clubhouse post-game. The bottles have gotten nic-



KAREN WARREN/AP

Members of team Italy celebrate a 8-6 victory over Puerto Rico in a World Baseball Classic quarterfinal game on Saturday in Houston. Italy earned its first trip to the semifinals with the win.

er with each victory, with the first ones costing around \$20 and more than tripling in price since then.

“There were some special bottles of wine today,” first baseman Vinnie Pasquantino said with a smile.

Saturday’s victory came after Italy handed the United States a surprising 8-6 loss in pool play. The Azzurri followed with a 9-1 defeat of Mexico that provided the help the Americans needed to reach the quarterfinals.

Cervelli and the players credited the win over the U.S. as the confidence boost this team needed in this history-making run.

“The key was the victory against USA,” Cervelli said. “Those guys beat one of the best teams in the world, best players in the world. Now they’re gonna believe.”

Italy’s success in this tournament is huge for a country in which baseball isn’t nearly as popular as it is in many of the coun-

tries competing in the WBC.

“I don’t think it would be hyperbole to say this is the best day in Italian baseball history,” Pasquantino said.

The team has received some criticism because most of the roster is comprised of Italian-Americans, many of whom have never even been to Italy. The players have heard that and brushed it off, saying getting a chance to represent Italy in this tournament has helped them grow closer to their

heritage.

“I’m just trying to take in as much as I can because I know that there’s a lot of people that are upset that we represent Italy, being Italian-American, but I take so much pride in it because it is my roots,” Pasquantino said. “My family came over for a better life to America and, I honestly don’t have any issue representing those members of my family and it’s just super cool to be given this opportunity from these guys.”

Andrew Fischer, who drove in two runs in Saturday’s victory, grew up on the Jersey Shore and is fiercely proud of being from New Jersey and of his Italian heritage.

He’s so proud being from New Jersey that he has multiple tattoos on his left arm paying homage to the state. While the tattoos are meant to highlight his home state, prominently featured in that ink is one of the most famous Italian Americans of all: Frank Sinatra.

Fischer already felt close to his Italian roots before the WBC but says this experience has enhanced that feeling.

“Being here and representing it definitely has brought some light to it in my life,” he said.

Now these plucky players will try to keep their undefeated run going and continue to impress the people in the country they represent.

“The level of confidence it’s growing and growing and growing,” Cervelli said. “We’ve got to stay humble, concentrate and do what we know that’s it. Play our game.”

History: Venezuela feeds off fans

FROM PAGE 24

Shohei Ohtani’s third home run of the tournament wasn’t enough for Japan. Ohtani, the 2023 WBC MVP, led off the bottom of the first by lifting a 2-1 slider from Ranger Suárez 427 feet to center after Ronald Acuña Jr. homered on the second pitch from Yoshinobu Yamamoto, driving a fastball 401 feet to right-center for his second home run of the WBC.

Enmanuel De Jesus pitched 2½ scoreless innings for the win, and Daniel Palencia got the save, ending Japan’s fate by getting Ohtani to pop out for the final out. He dejectedly detached his batting gloves, took off his helmet and headed down the dugout steps past shocked teammates who leaned on the railing and stared at the celebrating Venezuelans.

“I was really disappointed,” Ohtani said.

Japan led 5-2 after a four-run third in which Shota Morishita, who replaced the injured Seiya Suzuki at center field, hit a tie-

breaking, three-run homer off Suárez. The veteran left-hander who picked up a win in a group stage game against the Netherlands pitched 2½ innings on Saturday, allowing three hits, five runs and two home runs.

Ohtani was intentionally walked ahead of Morishita’s homer, but didn’t come through in his final three plate appearances, striking out in the fourth and seventh innings before making the final out in a 1-2-3 ninth.

Maikel Garcia sparked the comeback with a two-run homer in the fifth. Abreu followed with his first homer of the tournament, a 409-foot drive to right that put his team ahead for good.

Abreu, a two-time Gold Glove-winning right fielder for the Boston Red Sox, is hitting .294 with six RBIs in five WBC games.

He described Saturday’s moment as one of the best in his career — but he’s no stranger to epic performances.

Abreu hit a grand slam and in-

side-the-park home run in the same game against the Cincinnati Reds last year, becoming the sixth player in major league history and the second Red Sox player since 1939 to accomplish that. The inside-the-park home run was the first by a Boston player in Fenway Park since Jacoby Ellsbury on Sept. 19, 2011.

On Saturday, in a game with much higher stakes, Abreu said the team fed off the energy of the Venezuelan fans. They stood on their feet most of the game, cheering and banging drums after each play.

“I think that the crowd today and every game that we have played in this WBC, the fans have been great, incredible,” Abreu said. “You can feel the vibes. You can feel the support from the stands and from all the Venezuelans at home watching the game on TV.”

Abreu and his teammates know they’re not done. Venezuela will face Italy in the semifinals but also



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Japan’s Shohei Ohtani reacts after fly out during the ninth inning of a World Baseball Classic quarterfinal game against Venezuela on Saturday in Miami.

clinched a spot in the six-nation field for the 2028 Olympic baseball tournament, along with the United States and the Dominicans.

“I believe that this means a lot to us Venezuelans for the country,”

Abreu said. “Venezuela has participated in the Olympics in other categories and other sports, but we are trying to write our own history. Our team is well-prepared. ... The job is not completed. We have more to do.”

NBA

ROUNDUP

Doncic, Lakers edge Nuggets in OT

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Luka Doncic made a fall-away jumper with 0.5 seconds remaining in overtime and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Denver Nuggets 127-125 on Saturday night.

Austin Reaves forced overtime when he rebounded his intentionally missed free throw and made a floater with 1.9 seconds remaining in regulation.

Doncic created enough distance from Spencer Jones to make the 17-foot shot, finishing with 30 points, 13 assists and 11 rebounds as he continued his spectacular play during Los Angeles' five-game winning streak. Doncic then blocked Tim Hardaway Jr.'s desperation heave following a Denver timeout.

Reaves finished with 32 points, making the first free throw and then perfectly executing his missed second attempt off the front of the rim after the Nuggets fouled him to prevent a tying 3-point attempt leading 118-115 with 5.2 seconds left.

Nikola Jokic had 24 points, 16 rebounds and 14 assists for his 27th triple-double of the season. Aaron Gordon led the Nuggets with 27 points and Hardaway finished with 20.

Jamal Murray fouled out 31 seconds into overtime, finishing with five points, six rebounds and six assists on a miserable 1-for-14 night.

Magic 121, Heat 117: Paolo Banchero scored 27 points, Desmond Bane added 21 and visiting Orlando beat Miami, becoming the second team in the last 30 years to beat the same opponent five times in one season.

Wendell Carter Jr. scored 15 for the Magic, who won their seventh straight and snapped Miami's season-best, seven-game winning streak.

Orlando led by as many as 22, before Miami twice got within two in the final 18.5 seconds.

Orlando (38-28) moved a game clear of Miami (38-30) in the race for fifth in the Eastern Conference, plus is 10 games over .500 for the first time since the end of the 2023-24 season.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 22, while Bam Adebayo and Norman Powell each had 20 for Miami, which hadn't gone 0-5 against one team since doing so against New York — then coached by now-Heat President Pat Riley — in 1992-93.

The only other instance in the last three decades: New Orleans went 5-0 against Sacramento in 2023-24.

76ers 104, Nets 97: Quentin Grimes scored a season-high 28



KYUSUNG GONG/AP

Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic, right, celebrates the Lakers win over the Denver Nuggets in Los Angeles on Saturday. The Lakers defeated the Nuggets 127-125.

points and Philadelphia held on for a home victory over Brooklyn.

Grimes had eight rebounds for the short-handed 76ers, who were missing Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey and Kelly Oubre Jr., among other players. Justin Edwards scored 19 points while adding three steals.

Danny Wolf had 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who lost their third straight game. Josh Minton added 14 points.

The 76ers entered halftime up 53-31. Adem Bona's free throw with 3:02 left in the fourth quarter gave Philadelphia the lead for good at 88-87.

Hawks 122, Bucks 99: CJ McCollum scored 30 points, Jalen Johnson had his 12th triple-double of the season and host Atlanta beat Milwaukee for its ninth straight victory.

Johnson finished with 23 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds as Atlanta extended the longest current winning streak in the NBA. McCollum made seven 3-pointers and moved ahead of Paul Pierce into 16th place on the career list with 2,147.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker had 20 points for the Hawks, who led 60-52 after a first half with six lead changes and four ties. The Hawks then broke it open in the third quarter by outscoring Milwaukee 35-26, with McCollum scoring 11.

Ryan Rollins scored 22 points

for the Bucks, who were without Giannis Antetokounmpo after he sprained his left ankle during Milwaukee's 112-105 loss to Miami on Thursday. Kevin Porter Jr. added 18 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

Spurs 115, Hornets 102: Victor Wembanyama had 32 points, 12 rebounds, eight assists and three blocks in his return from a one-game absence, leading San Antonio to a home victory over Charlotte.

Miles Bridges had 22 points and Kon Knueppel added 20 for Charlotte, which had won two straight and eight of 10.

The Spurs have won 17 of 19 to tighten their grip on second in the Western Conference. San Antonio (49-18) is 7½ games ahead of No. 3 Houston (41-25) and three games behind Oklahoma City (52-15) for first.

The Spurs closed their longest homestand 5-1, with their only loss coming as Wembanyama watched from the bench because of a sore right calf in a 136-131 loss to Denver on Thursday that snapped a five-game winning streak.

Wembanyama had an immediate impact with 18 points, eight rebounds, two blocks and two steals in the first half.

Celtics 111, Wizards 100: Jayson Tatum had 20 points and 14 rebounds in a season-high 32 minutes, Neemias Queta had 24 points

and 10 rebounds and host Boston withstood a late charge to beat Washington for its 11th straight loss.

Tatum had his second double-double since making his season debut earlier this month. Jaylen Brown added 16 points to help the Celtics snap a two-game skid.

Washington, which was coming off erasing a 17-point deficit to force overtime in a loss at Orlando on Thursday, chopped Boston's lead to 12 in the fourth quarter. But the Celtics got a layup from Tatum and 3-pointer by Sam Hauser to help them close it out.

Tristan Vukcevic had 22 points to lead the Wizards.

Kings 118, Clippers 109: Russell Westbrook had 12 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for his 209th career triple-double and DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points to lead Sacramento to a road victory over Los Angeles.

Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points before leaving with a sprained left ankle for the Clippers, whose four-game winning streak was stopped. It was Leonard's 45th consecutive game with at least 20 points, topping Bob McAdoo's franchise record set during the 1974-75 season when the team was based in Buffalo.

Darius Garland added 25 points and Bennedict Mathurin had 24 for Los Angeles, which had won its last five at home.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	44	23	.657	—
New York	43	25	.632	1½
Toronto	37	29	.561	6½
Philadelphia	36	31	.537	8
Brooklyn	17	50	.254	27

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	38	28	.576	—
Miami	38	30	.559	1
Atlanta	36	31	.537	2½
Charlotte	34	34	.500	5
Washington	16	50	.242	22

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	48	18	.727	—
Cleveland	41	26	.612	7½
Milwaukee	27	39	.409	21
Chicago	27	40	.403	21½
Indiana	15	52	.224	33½

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	49	18	.731	—
Houston	41	25	.621	7½
Memphis	23	43	.348	25½
Dallas	22	45	.328	27
New Orleans	22	46	.324	27½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	52	15	.776	—
Minnesota	41	26	.612	11
Denver	41	27	.603	11½
Portland	32	35	.478	20
Utah	20	47	.299	32

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	42	25	.627	—
Phoenix	39	28	.582	3
L.A. Clippers	34	33	.507	8
Golden State	32	34	.485	9½
Sacramento	17	51	.250	25½

Saturday's games

Philadelphia 104, Brooklyn 97
Atlanta 122, Milwaukee 99
San Antonio 115, Charlotte 102
Boston 111, Washington 100
Orlando 121, Miami 117
L.A. Lakers 127, Denver 125, OT
Sacramento 118, L.A. Clippers 109

Sunday's games

Minnesota at Oklahoma City
Dallas at Cleveland
Detroit at Toronto
Indiana at Milwaukee
Portland at Philadelphia
Golden State at New York
Utah at Sacramento

Monday's games

Golden State at Washington
Orlando at Atlanta
Phoenix at Boston
Portland at Brooklyn
Dallas at New Orleans
Memphis at Chicago
L.A. Lakers at Houston
San Antonio at L.A. Clippers

Tuesday's games

Detroit at Washington
Miami at Charlotte
Oklahoma City at Orlando
Indiana at New York
Cleveland at Milwaukee
Phoenix at Minnesota
Philadelphia at Denver
San Antonio at Sacramento

Wednesday's games

Golden State at Boston
Oklahoma City at Brooklyn
Portland at Indiana
L.A. Clippers at New Orleans
Toronto at Chicago
Utah at Minnesota
Atlanta at Dallas
Denver at Memphis
L.A. Lakers at Houston

Scoring leaders

Through Saturday

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Doncic, LAL	55	580	432	1804	32.8
Gil-Alex., OKC	55	600	452	1747	31.8
Edwards, MIN	57	579	335	1691	29.7
Maxey, PHI	61	616	333	1767	29.0
Jokic, DEN	52	525	340	1487	28.6
Leonard, LAC	53	521	321	1500	28.3
Mitchell, CLE	59	579	309	1666	28.2
Brown, BOS	60	622	332	1693	28.2
Brunson, NY	63	586	307	1654	26.3
Durant, HOU	63	578	333	1635	26.0

COLLEGE BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

Burries, Arizona beat Houston in Big 12 final

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Brayden Burries scored 21 points, including a pair of free throws with 8.3 seconds left, and second-ranked Arizona held off No. 5 Houston 79-74 on Saturday night in a rematch of last year's Big 12 Tournament title game won by the Cougars.

Koa Peat also had 21 points and Jaden Bradley followed his game-winner in the semifinals against Iowa State with 13 for the No. 1 seed Wildcats (32-2), who head into the NCAA Tournament having won nine straight games — six against ranked opponents.

Joseph Tugler had 20 points and 10 rebounds for the second-seeded Cougars (28-6). Mercy Miller added 13 points.

Houston, which beat the Wildcats 72-64 in its title game debut a year ago, trailed 75-66 with just over a minute to go before Miller and Milos Uzan hit 3-pointers on consecutive possessions.

But when Peat missed a jumper with 22 seconds to go, Arizona big man Motiejus Krivas gathered the rebound and was fouled under the basket. The 7-foot-2 junior from Lithuania calmly made both free throws to extend the Wildcats' lead.

Kingston Flemings and Miller missed layups at the other end for Houston, and by the time Miller was fouled and made two free throws, there was just 13.2 seconds to go. Burries was fouled on the inbound pass and put away the game.

No. 1 Duke 74, No. 10 Virginia 70: Isaiah Evans scored 20 points, Cameron Boozer made two free throws with 3.9 seconds to seal the game and host Duke defeated Virginia for its second straight Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament championship under coach Jon Scheyer and its third title in the past four years.

Cayden Boozer had 16 points, and Cameron Boozer finished with 13 points, eight rebounds and eight assists as the Blue Devils (32-2) extended their winning streak to 11 games heading into the NCAA Tournament as the likely No. 1 overall seed.

Malik Thomas had 18 points and Sam Lewis had 17 for Virginia (29-5) in a game in which neither team led by more than seven points and featured 16 lead changes.

No. 3 Michigan 68, No. 23 Wisconsin 65: Yaxel Lendeborg made a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds remaining, and host Michigan beat Nick Boyd and Wisconsin to advance to the Big Ten Tournament championship.

Aday Mara scored 16 points and Elliot Cadeau had 15 as top-seeded Michigan (31-2) avenged its only conference loss from the regular season, a 91-88 setback against Wisconsin on Jan. 10. Mara also



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Houston's Kingston Flemings, right, and Arizona's Brayden Burries battle for the ball during the second half in the championship game of the Big 12 Conference tournament on Saturday in Kansas City, Mo.

grabbed eight rebounds and blocked five shots.

With the United Center crowd standing in anticipation, Michigan tried to find Lendeborg inside on its last possession. But Lendeborg ended up coming back outside before getting a pass from Cadeau and drilling the winning 3.

No. 22 Vanderbilt 91, No. 4 Florida 74: Tyler Tanner scored 20 points as host Vanderbilt beat Florida, ending the defending national champion's bid to win a second straight Southeastern Conference Tournament title and possibly hurt the Gators' bid for a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

The fourth-seeded Commodores won their fourth straight game. Vanderbilt (26-7) will play No. 17 Arkansas on Sunday as it goes for its first tournament title since 2012.

The Gators (26-7) saw their 12-game winning streak end. Thomas Haugh led them with 19 points, Boogie Fland had 15, Alex Condon 13 and Rueben Chinyelu 12.

No. 13 St. John's 72, No. 6 UConn 52: Zuby Ejiofor had seven blocks, nine rebounds and three steals to anchor a tenacious defensive performance that carried St. John's to its second straight Big East Tournament championship with a home blowout of UConn at Madison Square Garden.

Ejiofor and Bryce Hopkins each scored 18 points for the top-seeded Red Storm (28-6), who became the first team to win consecutive Big East Tournament titles since Villanova took three in a row from

2017-19.

Tarris Reed Jr. scored 13 of his 17 points in the second half for UConn. Point guard Silas Demary Jr. was helped off the floor late with an apparent left ankle injury, which could be costly heading into the NCAA Tournament.

No. 17 Arkansas 93, Mississippi 90 (OT): Darius Acuff Jr. scored five of his 24 points in overtime and host Arkansas held off Mississippi to reach the Southeastern Conference Tournament championship game for the first time since 2017.

The third-seeded Razorbacks (25-8) will play No. 22 Vanderbilt, which routed No. 4 Florida earlier Saturday.

No. 18 Purdue 73, UCLA 66: Oscar Cluff had 17 points and 14 rebounds, and visiting Purdue beat short-handed UCLA to advance to the Big Ten Tournament championship game.

Cluff scored eight points as Purdue (26-8) outscored UCLA (23-11) 11-4 over the final 3:41. Fletcher Loyer scored 14. Braden Smith contributed nine more assists, giving him 1,064 in his career. He needs 13 to break Bobby Hurley's NCAA record of 1,076 for Duke from 1989-93.

UMBC 74, Vermont 59: DJ Armstrong buried seven 3-pointers and scored a career-high 33 points, leading top-seeded UMBC to a home victory over No. 2-seed Vermont in the championship game of the America East tournament.

The Retrievers (24-8) will play in the NCAA Tournament for the

third time and earned their first bid since 2018, when they famously became the first 16-seed to beat a No. 1 seed, upsetting Virginia 74-54.

Three 3-pointers by Armstrong, with the second one resulting in a four-point play, gave UMBC a 64-56 lead with less than two minutes remaining in the game. Armstrong and Josh Odunowo then combined to go 10 for 10 from the free-throw line to finish off the win.

The Retrievers finished 15-2 at home this season and went undefeated at home against America East opponents.

Akron 79, Toledo 76: Reserve Shammah Scott scored 12 points and his 25-foot, 3-point basket with six seconds left helped Akron beat Toledo in the Mid-American Conference title game.

Toledo appeared poised to knock off the conference's second-best regular season team — after Miami, Ohio — by building a 42-30 halftime lead. The Rockets built their lead on the strength of 53% (17-for-32) shooting including 53% (8-for-15) from 3-point range.

But Akron regrouped early in the second half and outscored Toledo 21-6 in a 7-minute span — which also included a 15-0 run — and turned a 48-36 deficit into a 57-54 lead with 10:17 remaining.

Austin Parks' desperation 3-point attempt for Toledo bounced off the back of the rim.

Utah State 73, San Diego State 62: MJ Collins Jr. scored 20 points to lead the top-seeded Aggies past the No. 2 seed Aztecs to

win the Mountain West tournament championship.

Collins was 8-for-15 shooting and 4-for-10 behind the arc with three steals for Utah State (28-6). Mason Falslev, who was named Mountain West Player of the Year, had 16 points — 10 in the second half — and six assists. Drake Allen added 13 points and six rebounds.

The Aggies led by one point with 7:40 to go before going on a 12-2 run over the next three minutes, led by a pair of 3-pointers from Collins. The Aztecs (22-11) never got closer than eight points after that.

Hawaii 71, UC Irvine 64: Isaac Johnson scored 22 points to lead No. 2 seed Hawaii to a road victory over top-seeded UC Irvine on Saturday night for the Rainbow Warriors' first Big West Championship title and NCAA Tournament berth since 2016 — coach Eran Ganot's first with the program.

Hawaii (24-8) led for most of the game and took the lead for good on Johnson's layup with about 10 minutes to play. UC Irvine pulled to 66-64 with 38 seconds left but Harry Rouhliadoff answered with a layup and then Dre Bullock followed with a breakaway two-hand slam dunk to help seal it for the Warriors.

Kennesaw St. 70, Louisiana Tech 60: Jaden Harris and Amir Taylor combined to score 35 points and visiting No. 6 seed Kennesaw State defeated No. 4 seed Louisiana Tech to win their first Conference USA championship and clinch a berth to the NCAA Tournament.

Harris posted 18 on 4 of 6 from behind the arc. Taylor had 17, going 9 for 11 from the free-throw line, while tallying six rebounds and two steals. RJ Johnson added 13 points, six rebounds, four assists and two steals.

Howard 70, NC Central 63: Cam Gillus, Ose Okojie and Bryce Harris all scored 14 points, and the top-seeded Bison opened the second half with a decisive run to beat No. 3 seed North Carolina Central, claiming the MEAC title and a spot in the NCAA tournament.

Howard (23-10) led 26-23 at halftime before breaking the game open down the stretch. The Bison opened the second half on a 15-1 run, turning a three-point lead into a 41-24 advantage with 16:18 remaining and did not trail the rest of the way.

Prairie View A&M 72, Southern 63: Lance Williams scored 18 points and visiting No. 8 seed Prairie View A&M beat third-seeded Southern 72-66 on Saturday night to win the SWAC Tournament.

It's the third title for Prairie View A&M (18-17) and the first since 2019. The Panthers are also the lowest seed to win the tournament since eighth-seeded Texas Southern in 2023.

SPORTS



Conference champs

No. 2 Arizona holds off No. 5 Houston for Big 12 title » College basketball, Page 23

BASEBALL



MARTA LAVANDIER/AP

Venezuela's Wilyer Abreu celebrates with teammates after hitting a home run in the sixth inning of a World Baseball Classic quarterfinal game against Japan on Saturday in Miami.

'Trying to write our own history'

Abreu's 3-run homer lifts Venezuela past Japan and into its first WBC semifinal game in 17 years

BY ALANIS THAMES
Associated Press

MIAMI
Wilyer Abreu watched the ball leave the park and tossed his bat high in the air. His Venezuela teammates streamed out of the dugout in celebration. The comeback was on, and the win over the reigning World Baseball Classic champion Japan was within reach.

Japan, its 11-game WBC winning streak on the line, held a 5-4 lead in the sixth inning of Saturday's thrilling quarterfinal match-up in Miami when Abreu put his team ahead with the biggest swing of the game: a three-run shot off Hiromi Itoh that sent the loanDepot Park crowd into a passionate roar and helped clinch Venezuela's 8-5 win and first WBC semifinal appearance in 17 years.
"That was an exciting moment,"

Abreu said in a postgame television interview. "I tried to at least tie the game with a sac fly. He gave me a really good pitch to hit. I made good contact. I'm very excited for this win. Now in the semifinals I hope I can do the same thing I did today."

Venezuela faces unbeaten Italy on Monday, a day after the U.S. plays the Dominican Republic.

SEE HISTORY ON PAGE 21



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Abreu celebrates after hitting a home run during the sixth inning.

Doncic, Lakers defeat Nuggets in overtime » NBA, Page 22

